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SELF-REVELATION OF THE ADOLESCENT BOY

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Self-Revelation of the Adolescent Boy

A Key to Understanding the Modern Adolescent

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To

My Father and Mother

For Their

Helpful Understanding

During My

Teen Years

FOREWORD

The period of adolescence is the most mysterious in life. If childhood is a riddle, then adolescence is a Chinese puzzle that invites every new generation of parents and teachers to attempt a solution. There is a wall around Boyville and Girldom, and the gate is closed to all adults. Novelists and playwrights, philosophers and psychologists have tried to break through the wall, but the sincere investigator must confess that the period continues full of mysteries.

Twenty years ago the present writer had to admit in a book written for teachers that Catholic scholars in our country had kept strangely aloof from the subject of adolescence. Hence it was that we had to rely upon our own limited experience or go to foreign Catholic writers or to pagans (ancient and modern) to get a glimpse into the mysterious country. We therefore hoped anxiously for the day when some Catholic educator would have the courage to record for us what he and his brothers and sisters in the profession had gathered from intimate contact with the boy and girl.

This hope has now been realized as is evident from the bibliography appended to the present book. Catholic men and women have made valuable contributions to the American literature on adolescence. We feel confident that all serious students of the subject will welcome Doctor Urban Fleege's book as a scholarly addition to this literature. The author presents not merely the diaries of a half dozen individuals but the reactions of two thousand American boys to their personal problems. The boys themselves describe their problems realistically, and thus the book is a firsthand account of what perplexes modern youth in a rapidly changing world. The author has gathered all this original material in such an honest way that we may have confidence in his findings as being true to fact. The book has evolved out of the minds and hearts of two thousand normal American boys and should therefore appeal to the heart and mind of every adult — whether parent, priest, or teacher — whose privilege it may be to stand by the boy while he passes through the most critical time of his life.

Felix M. Kirsch, O.F.M.Cap., Ph.D., Litt.D.

The Catholic University of America,
February 28, 1944.

PREFACE

Of all the periods of life, adolescence is perhaps the most challenging and the richest in opportunity for effecting good. It is the time of budding talents and new feelings, a time when the flood of energy and enthusiasm runs high, a time when generosity and good will are at their peak. It is the time when the bloom of life is on the cheek, when the desire to do and dare shines through the eye, the time when every suggestion is met with a thrilling freshness and a throbbing ardor. It is the time when youth are on tiptoe, ready to advance at the word *go* — a time of delicate balance when the least touch of our influence sends them flying in the direction of our choice.

Thus, those of us vouchsafed the privilege of working with high-school students carry a tremendous responsibility. We must know the adolescent better than he knows himself, we must understand him better than he understands himself, we must be capable of feeling as he feels, we must be aware of his problems and understand his reactions in the thousand and one situations in his environment; otherwise we shall not bring to him that sympathetic attitude which is the first condition for any success in our dealings with the adolescent.

Any time spent among teen-age youth, any reading or experience that will give us a fuller picture of the adolescent and of the difficulties he meets with in his attempts at adjustment will be much to our advantage. Unless we have an intimate understanding of the problems and points of view which adolescents have as they go through this period of change, we shall be in no position to win their confidence.

It is absolutely necessary for parents, teachers, pastors, youth leaders, adults, in contact with high-school students, not only to understand the mercurial character of adolescence, but they must be aware of and be able to identify their students' major problems and needs. At the present time there is a serious lack of adequate and reliable information on high-school students. Much of a general nature has been written on adolescence, but it is largely descriptive and from the point of view of adults viewing adolescence from the outside, or as they dimly remember it from their own youth. The need at the present is for factual information, for the views of the adolescent himself; how he regards life at present, what he finds difficult, where he finds his greatest problems, what difficulties of adjustment he finds in his home and school life, what problems he has in the social world about him, what things puzzle him about himself, what his ideals and ambitions are, what he regards as important, how he inwardly reacts to the efforts of teachers and parents — these things

are important — and must be known if we are to deal with him effectively. It is with the hope of filling out some of the needed details in the picture of the modern adolescent that the author presents his findings. The emphasis throughout is on the point of view of the adolescent himself — not what we think his problems might be, but what he himself says his problems are. Hence the findings presented here show adolescence from the inside.

The treatment, however, is more than a mere exposition of adolescent problems. Interpretations are presented, and frequently in the words of the adolescents themselves. Remedies, too, are indicated for various problems, but most of these are suggestive rather than exhaustive.

If the reader desires a preliminary view of the high lights of the author's findings, it is suggested that he read Chapter 18.

The writer wishes to express his gratitude to all those who have contributed toward making this work possible. Foremost among these are his religious superiors: Very Reverend Sylvester P. Juergens, S.M., S.T.D., and Reverend Brother Eugene A. Paulin, S.M., Ph.D., and all his confreres of the Society of Mary. Particular thanks are due to Reverend Dr. Felix M. Kirsch, O.F.M.Cap., for his patient, helpful direction and frequent encouragement while the present work was in progress; likewise to Dr. Rudolph Allers, for his extensive, penetrating, and constructive criticisms, as well as to the Reverend Drs. Maurice S. Sheehy, Ferdinand B. Gruen, O.F.M., and Thomas F. Carey, O.P., for their critical reading of the manuscript. In addition to these the writer is indebted to his fellow Brothers, Francis A. Greiner, S.M., and Aloysius J. Blume, S.M., for correcting the manuscript, to Dr. Fred J. Junker, S.M., for criticism of certain chapters, and to Dr. Thomas J. Treadaway, S.M., for lending secretarial aid. Grateful acknowledgment is also given to Brothers Louis A. Schuster, S.M., for designing the symbols used in the pictographs and to Henry A. Heidemann, S.M., for drawing the figures in the text. Thanks are also due to various publishers of books and magazines for material quoted or drawn upon throughout this work.

Finally the author is indebted to the principals and teachers in the twenty high schools in which this investigation was carried on. Singled out for particular mention is the senior class (1939) of St. Anthony's High School, Washington, D. C., for their able assistance in the tabulation of the problemmaires.

The material of the present volume was developed by the author as partial fulfillment of the requirement for a degree, Doctor of Philosophy, and was presented to the faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of the Catholic University of America under the title, *Personal Problems of the Modern Adolescent.*

URBAN H. FLEEGE, S.M.

Cathedral High School
Belleville, Illinois
January 2, 1944

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I

UNDERSTANDING THE ADOLESCENT BOY

Chapter 1

APPROACHING THE BOY'S PROBLEMS

One must understand a person if he wants to influence that person — especially is this true of young persons in their teen age. Adolescents living in a borderland between childhood and maturity are no longer inclined to trust elders just because they are older, nor are they as yet in possession of an insight sufficient to make them trust in authority. For this reason no age is more difficult to approach or influence than the age of adolescence. As Rudolph Allers points out, "Nowhere is the educator, accordingly, more in need of a thorough understanding of the personality which he has to direct and to mould."[1] But to understand the adolescent's personality, it is necessary to become aware not only of the way the adolescent conceives of self and reality, but of the way in which he reacts to his entire environment and to the various problems he meets in attempting to adjust himself to this environment. Without an understanding of the problems which our modern high-school boys are facing day after day, it will be difficult for the teacher, the parent, and the priest to show that degree of sympathetic interest which paves the way for lasting influence.

Early Years of Adolescence Most Influential

A realization of the problems of the high-school boy is of prime importance because of the significance of adolescence in the life of an individual. Because the impressions which are made upon the boy during this period are so deep and lasting, it is of utmost importance that those guiding him maintain his confidence by giving proof in their dealings with him that they understand his problems. Unless this is done, the influence which they may attempt to exert will take only second place to the other influences in his environment.

Cardinal Gibbons realized the importance of this period when he said, "Give me the boy to train and I care not for the rest of the world, for the boy of today will be the rest of the world tomorrow." The Cardinal understood that he who commands the confidence and respect of the boy during these impressionable years commands the future. It is during these formative years that the boy is molded into the final form of body, mind, and character which will mark him for life. At no other time is the individual so responsive to the

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[1] "Character Education in Adolescence," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review,* 39 (1938), 122–128.

influences, whether good or evil, in his environment. On the one hand, his recently expanded mental powers make it possible for him to comprehend for the first time certain new relations and meanings; on the other hand, his lack of definite knowledge both of himself and of the world creates feelings of insecurity within him, which prompt him to seek help and advice. But he will accept advice only from those who convince him by their sympathetic manner of approach that they understand his difficulties.

For this reason it is so necessary to know the adolescent's problems from his point of view; it is not a matter of what adults think his problems are, but of what he actually feels his problems to be. It is only by seeing the boy's difficulties as he sees them that his confidence can be maintained; for only in this manner will the adult be able to help the adolescent to see his problems in the light of the underlying factors involved. And if someone can point out clearly to the boy the factors involved in his problems, he will be able to handle them much better than without such understanding. But the pathway to this understanding lies largely through contact with adults who see eye to eye with the adolescent concerning the problems which confront him.

At the present, however, there is a lack of adequate and reliable information on the adolescent's problems. With Dimock we agree that "the resources of knowledge about the adolescent are inadequate for our needs."[2] Much of what has been written has either stressed the adult's concept of what the adolescent's problems were thought to be, or has focused attention on the abnormal in an effort to untangle the roots of delinquency. Little of any importance, however, has been brought to light concerning the problems of the normal adolescent. Strangely enough, the information concerning the problems of college students is more extensive and adequate than is the comparable material on high-school students.[3] It is true, much has been written on the subject of the high-school adolescent, but so much of it never gets beyond generalities, never presents any specific and reliable evidence from the point of view of the adolescent himself. Paul H. Furfey remarks, "In spite of the large amount of literature which adolescent problems have evoked, the surprising fact remains that authentic scientific research in this field is still extremely rare."[4] Yet, adequate information on the problems and mental and emotional reactions of the modern adolescent is a crying need, not only for the adult immediately concerned with the adolescent but also for the school administrator. For unless educational authorities know how adolescents are reacting to the attempts of schools and institutions to

[2] H. S. Dimock, *Rediscovering the Adolescent* (New York: Association Press, 1937), 2.

[3] Ruth Strang, *Behavior and Background of Students in College and Secondary School* (New York: Harper and Bros. Publishers, 1937), 18.

[4] "Adolescence," *Catholic Educational Review*, 28 (1931), 467.

meet their current needs, the authorities are seriously handicapped in any constructive, long-range planning.

Purpose of the Study: to Explore the Modern Catholic Boy's Problems

With the accelerated tempo of modern life creating difficulties for the adolescent which the adolescent of a generation ago never dreamed of, the dim remembrance of one's own teens can no longer be relied upon in the work of interpreting the adolescent to himself. Today cities are different, neighborhoods are different, homes are different; consequently, many of the problems of the adolescent are bound to be different. But what are these problems and how do they differ from the problems of a former age? Furthermore, what is it that the adolescent of today admires in this modern environment, what does he value, what does he fear, what disturbs him most, what does he think of our present efforts in his behalf?

Failure to find an answer to these questions in current educational literature prompted the present study. Such information is indispensable if our efforts are to correspond with the modern adolescent's needs. We cannot be sure that our educational program is achieving maximum results unless we go directly to those whose needs we must meet.

It is not only the problem of the school, but of society at large, to facilitate the adjustments which the adolescent must make in finding his place in contemporary adult life. Society, as well as the school, has the task of helping him make the transition from boyhood to maturity as easily and satisfactorily as possible, and as beneficially as possible for society as a whole. Such facilitation calls for firsthand information on the problems which modern environmental influences set in the boy's path as he travels the shifting road from dependent childhood to independent manhood.

The purpose of this investigation, therefore, was to obtain, analyze, interpret, and appraise confidential information on the modern adolescent's problems as he himself sees and experiences them in his efforts at adjusting himself to his complex environment. The study was made with a threefold purpose in view: (1) to provide teachers, parents, and priests with a knowledge of the high-school boy's problems as he himself sees them; and thus (2) indirectly to provide the material for helpful and understanding guidance of the adolescent boy in meeting the problems that arise during this period; and (3) to point the way to further and more detailed research by outlining the trends of the modern adolescent's problems. Hence, this study was designed to give an overview of the problems of the adolescent, not an exhaustive treatment of any single phase of the subject, yet a sufficiently detailed treatment so as to show the nature and extent of the principal problems that enter into the adolescent's daily life.

Emphasis throughout the study was on normal adolescents in normal life situations.

The term "adolescence" is generally understood to mean that period of transition in which the youth changes from boy to man, and usually is said to extend from the age of twelve to twenty-one. But in this study the term is used to refer primarily to the early part of adolescence, the beginning years when the problems are likely to be the most severe because of the suddenness of the changes and the strangeness of the new and hitherto unexperienced thoughts, emotions, and relations that come to the individual during the early years of this period.

Though the 2000 Catholic adolescents included in this study are all high-school boys, their ages range from twelve to twenty inclusive. However, 88 per cent of those included were between the ages of fourteen and seventeen, with more than half of them either fifteen or sixteen years old at the time of the administration of the problem-maire. In other words, more than three out of every four boys of our study were between twelve and sixteen years old when they reported on their problems.

Change, a Fundamental Characteristic of Adolescence

It is during the boy's years of adolescence that the need of an understanding friend is particularly felt because of the almost complete reversal of his status that takes place during these years. At the opening of the adolescent period, he finds himself a dependent, protected, and subordinate individual within the family circle. His role is simple and irresponsible; his status is accordingly that of an inferior. But at the end of the period, he is found to be independent and responsible, with a superior status in the wider social group. Such a relatively rapid shift necessitates the formation of new relationships with almost everyone within his environment and involves extensive and profound changes in his whole life organization. The complex of his mental attitudes and his outlook on life must undergo similar changes. His activities and interests, desires and ideals, likewise give way to new patterns. The expanded physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual phases of his being permit him to grasp deeper meanings and to see new relations; these in turn furnish him with new motives, fire him with high ambitions, charge his mind with new plans, and send him off into the realms of fancy surging beyond the uttermost bounds of childhood dreams.

But he still feels himself in a no man's land between his lost status as a child and his unattained status as an adult. He feels himself pushed out of the ranks of the child but as yet not accepted within the ranks of the mature. It is precisely this uncertainty which characterizes these early years of adolescence and underlies many of the problems of adjustment during this period. As Allers expresses it:

> There is in fact nothing of which the youthful mind is not uncertain. The adolescent feels that he is no longer a child, and that the ways of thinking, of acting, of feeling he was used to are no more suited to his present state; but he is very acutely aware also that he is not yet grown up, and that the ways of the adult are no better suited to him. Habits of childhood still cling on; new habits have not yet become fixed. . . . There is nothing as yet to replace the old world the child moved in, with so much confidence. The necessity of relying on oneself is imposing itself, but the self is still a floating, uncertain, changing something which is not really known, and cannot be known, since it is not yet formed. The main characteristic of adolescence is indeed the definite formation of the self.[5]

Until a definite idea of the self is formed and his status in the adult group is established, the adolescent lives in a borderland of uncertainty with overhanging clouds of doubt and fear often darkening his path, giving the world itself an air of change and mystery. He looks to the world about him for definiteness, stability, and patterns of conduct, but instead finds a maze of baffling inconsistencies, confusing standards, and conflicting patterns of behavior. And as a consequence, the transition to adulthood is rendered more difficult and problems of adjustment more puzzling than ever.

Subjects of Study a True Cross Section of the Catholic High-School Population

In order to insure a representative sampling of the average boy found in the Catholic high school, we were most careful in selecting the 20 schools contributing to this study so that we would truly have a cross section of the Catholic high-school population. Schools were selected according to the following four criteria: First, we took into account the social and economic background of the homes from which the schools draw their students. Thus, the students in one of the schools which cooperated in this investigation come largely from the poorest class in the city where the fathers are either industrial workers or on relief; those from another school come largely from the wealthy class; others come from varying socioeconomic levels between these two extremes.

Second, we considered geographical location. Schools were selected in 18 cities in 12 states in the middle western, the eastern, and the northeastern sections of the United States and the District of Columbia. In order to make our findings more definite, we limited our study by including Catholic high schools only in cities of 50,000 population or above, with emphasis on schools in cities of several hundred thousand population. Accordingly, 9 schools were selected in cities of 300,000 or less, 6 schools in cities of a population between 300,000 and one million, and 4 schools in cities with a population of

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[5] "Character Education in Adolescence," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, 39 (1938), 14–15.

more than a million. Furthermore, it may be mentioned that the schools included in our investigation represent 8 of the 10 leading states according to Catholic school population. Actually, one out of every 63 boys in the Catholic high schools of the United States contributed to our study.

Third, our selection took into account faculty representation. Ten of the schools which cooperated in our investigation are taught by brothers representing the 3 principal teaching orders of brothers in the United States, 4 are staffed by sisters from various orders, 3 by religious priests representative of the largest teaching orders of priests, 2 by diocesan priests, and the faculty of one of the schools is made up of priests, religious, and lay teachers.

Fourth, schools were selected according to size and type. Seven of the schools have an enrollment between 140 and 300, 8 between 300 and 700, and 5 have an enrollment above 700. Thirteen are day schools for boys only, 4 are coeducational, one partly coeducational, and one a boarding school.

These schools are likewise representative of the Catholic high schools in the United States in so far as the majority offer a strictly academic curriculum, though a number do offer a choice among three or four curriculums. From the point of view of guidance facilities, extracurricular activities, and programs of a social nature, these schools are likewise representative of the average Catholic high school.

With such caution taken to obtain a representative sampling in our data, we feel that our findings can be interpreted as representing the general picture of adolescents as found in our Catholic high schools in the cities of the United States.

Developing a Means of Discovering the Adolescent's Problems

One of the first problems of this study was the development of a scientifically reliable means of discovering in the hidden recesses of the adolescent's mind what he regarded as his problems and how he reacted to the adjustments that had to be made in his transition from boyhood to maturity. Since our purpose was to discover problem trends rather than detailed problems of individual cases, the case study method of approach was ruled out; furthermore, to get the general picture of problems among adolescents, it was necessary to have a large sampling drawn from a wide and varied background. An analysis of existing studies and surveys revealed no ready-made means by which we could obtain our desired information. A preliminary investigation of the recent attitude inventory techniques as developed by Thurstone, Remmers, and others, proved that they were inadequate, since they provided no opportunity for spontaneous response which we deemed highly desirable in investigating a matter as subjective as the problems of the adolescent. Consequently, through trial and revision during nearly six months of preliminary investiga-

tion, we developed a problemmaire which combines features of a number of measuring techniques but notably of the personality inventory and psychological questionnaire. This problemmaire enabled us not only to indicate the degree of response but also afforded the students an opportunity for spontaneity of reaction. The writer was fully aware of the disfavor with which the questionnaire technique is regarded. However, he was not deterred from incorporating it in the method of investigation used in the present study because the conditions under which the technique was employed rendered it reliable and scientific. Symonds cites a number of reliable investigations in support of his contention that, when a certain amount of mutual understanding and cooperation is established between the investigator and his subjects, the latter will answer a psychological questionnaire truthfully.[6]

However, a technique of this kind can be regarded as scientific and the results can be counted reliable only if (1) this method is the most feasible method of investigating the problem at hand — other methods proving either impossible or impractical; (2) the conditions under which the information is obtained remove all factors which ordinarily cause hesitation or "cover up" in the response; and (3) checks are provided by which the information obtained can be proved reliable and valid. In this investigation all these conditions were definitely present as we shall point out.

The final form of our problemmaire represents the culmination of seven previous revisions. In the preparatory stages of the problemmaire, the writer obtained the advice of authorities in the field of adolescence, the help of teachers intimately associated with the high-school boy, as well as suggestions which the boys themselves contributed both through interviews with the writer and in the results of trial administrations of the problemmaire. Items were added, eliminated, reworded until the results of the second-last revision, which was administered to two high schools, convinced us that our measuring instrument, as we intended to use it, was satisfactory and reliable. Our preliminary trials likewise included a vocabulary study of the wording of the questions, so that no words above the freshman level of comprehension appeared in the final form.

The reliability and validity of the problemmaire are amply attested by the remarkable internal consistency evident in our data. Numerous interlocking and reverse questions were scattered through the problemmaire for the prime purpose of determining the reliability and validity of our information. The consistency in the replies to these check questions will be pointed out later as the subjects of these questions arise for treatment. This same method of judging internal consistency

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[6] Percival M. Symonds, *Diagnosing Personality and Conduct* (New York: The Century Co., 1931), 15.

was found by Thurstone to be a better check on validity than correlation with outside criteria. Vernon and Allport and others are also of the same opinion and have used this method in validating their measuring instruments.[7]

It is true that in certain circumstances the adolescent may hesitate to reveal his difficulties, but this hesitancy is entirely absent when the causes for reticence are removed. An adolescent will withhold his true feelings if he has reason to fear criticism or social disapproval. But assure him of perfect anonymity, assure him of the questioner's interest in him, show him that he has an opportunity to be of service to others by being frank and truthful while at the same time helping himself, and he will grasp without hesitation the opportunity to give verbal expression to his most intimate problems.

Administering the Problemmaire

In administering the problemmaire,[8] the assembly method of presentation was adopted as the most feasible. The cooperation on the part of the faculties and the enthusiastic response on the part of the pupils was most encouraging.

Thirty students from each of the four levels in the school were selected at random and assembled in a large room or auditorium where the writer (who personally conducted the investigation in each of the 20 schools) set about to establish the proper rapport by introducing himself and his purpose of meeting the boys with a few stories pertinent to the occasion. The goodhearted laugh that followed was sufficient to establish an atmosphere of friendliness and understanding which put the boys in a cooperative frame of mind.

The boys were told very frankly that the purpose of their selection was to give them an opportunity to help other boys by participating in a "scientific study of boys by boys," that we adults were coming to them to learn just what they thought about "a whole lot of things," what their problems were, what they liked, and what they did not like. We further stressed that no names were to be signed, and that no one else outside of themselves and the writer would see what they wrote, not even the principal of the school. This introduction inevitably brought forth enthusiastic applause. How eagerly the boys welcomed the opportunity may be seen from the remarks of a number of them who explain:

> This is the first time I've ever had a chance to write what was on my mind without having to sign my name to it. I want you to know that I answered every single question as truthfully as I could.

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[7] G. W. Allport and P. E. Vernon, "The Field of Personality," *Psychological Bulletin*, 27 (1930), 677–730.

[8] The problemmaires were administered over a six-week period during the second month of the school year, 1939–1940.

I liked this questionnaire because you can say what you think without having to sign your name and risking a bawling out.

This is the first time I have ever had the opportunity in school to express myself. Thank you very much.

This is the first time an opportunity has come to tell really how I feel about certain matters.

Writing this out did me a great deal of good because I said what I have been wanting to say for a long time.

This is a smart thing to do. It gives every boy a chance to unveil his difficulties without being laughed at.

I think this is a swell idea; it gave me a chance to say what I've never had a chance to tell anyone.

This test gave me a chance to relieve myself of many difficulties without the fear of being found out. Thanks.

We further stimulated the boys' willingness to cooperate by appealing to their natural altruism and desire to be of service to others, pointing out to them that they, together with other boys throughout the United States, were the only ones who could give us the information we were asking for, and that the success of this study depended on the truthfulness with which they answered each question. We also pointed out to them that by so cooperating they would be helping thousands of other boys in the future; but that by failing to be frank and truthful they would be destroying the good effect of all the others because they would not be giving the true picture of themselves. We stressed particularly that the boys should not answer at all if they felt they could not answer truthfully, and that they should not answer the way they thought someone in authority might want them to answer, but simply the way they felt. In order to make sure that the proximity of another boy would not inhibit the timid from being perfectly frank, all students were requested to cover up their work as they progressed from item to item, thus guaranteeing perfect secrecy for all.

Boys Welcome Opportunity to Express Their Problems

The spirit with which the boys responded to this appeal was nothing short of marvelous. The seriousness with which they set about the task of filling out the problemmaire was most remarkable. The delight with which they welcomed the opportunity to express themselves in confidence shone in their faces. It was quite evident that they realized the value of the project before them. For some it was an opportunity which they had been seeking for several years; for many others it seemed to provide an outlet which permitted the verbalizing of vague difficulties felt within themselves. These difficulties being now brought to light in a definite formulation, the boys were left with a sense of welcome relief. As many a boy expressed himself, "It made me feel mighty good to get off my chest these things that were bothering me." Others expressed their gratitude in a word of comment at the end of the problemmaire. The following are representa-

tive of these remarks and give the reader some idea of the sincerity and earnestness with which the boys answered the questions.

I wish to thank the composers for allowing us to give our views on these vital questions and I wish to add that this test helped me very much.

I sincerely enjoyed answering these questions and hope you will gain information to help others from it.

Writing these things out has taken a good load off my mind.

I believe this test has been a great help to me because now I know what I think.

This helped me to spill out of my system what I've always wanted to say but didn't have the chance.

I hope that this test will help other boys. I am glad I had the chance to say the personal things about my life I did say.

This is very helpful but I certainly would like to see some action on my problems.

Some of these questions were a bit personal but they really did me a lot of good.

I want to thank you for letting me say what I think. This is something I have always wanted to do. Thank you.

This is the best idea that has hit this burgh in years, and I hope the results can be used to remedy my problems and those of others.

I found this quiz very interesting and you will find that I answered them all honestly.

This is an ideal thing, giving the boy a chance to express his own ideas about life with nobody trying to tell him what to write and how to write it.

Thanks for the opportunity. I hope my paper is of assistance to the men who are making a study of these problems.

I think this is a very important test and hope this investigation will be very successful, but it should have been carried out before. I'm happy to help if I can.

I believe that the making of a book out of these answers is a great idea and all parents should have a copy so they can see what their children believe in regard to certain subjects.

This booklet is perfect and it makes me feel good to be able to write down something like this for once.

I have been proud to help you and I hope you are successful in your work. Good luck!

This is a good idea to help others. I have said things I wouldn't have dared say before.

I feel as though I have been given an opportunity to unburden my mind.

I think this booklet is about the finest thing I have ever seen for high-school boys. It makes me appreciate my religion more to know that the Church is taking such an interest in our problems.

I wish that some schools would pay attention to some of these questions.

These questions are those that students have been longing to answer for a long time.

I am grateful for this opportunity to wholly express myself and to tell my thoughts and ideas so that you might be able to do something to relieve those of others.

I enjoyed doing this — too bad it was not done before.

I believe this is one of the most beneficial censuses of boys that has ever been taken. It should have come about 10 years ago so that we might have profited from its results as I hope boys in the future will.

This questionnaire is okay but the teachers should get to read the results so they can see what we think and what we have to go through.

This has been a delightful undertaking and it has helped me to see some of my problems which were written down as questions.

Thank you very much. A very interesting way to allow modern youth to express their views.

A good idea — I think it is good to have someone know your problems. I hope this will be the foundation of a better generation.

I think that this "private life examination" is the best thing for a boy to take. Believe me, it took a lot off my mind.

I think this is the best idea I've seen yet to help growing boys. Please use this to compile a real book to help fellows like us.

No definite time was prescribed in which the boys had to finish the problemmaire, though the majority took about an hour. This period was interrupted at the end of the first half hour for a brief rest during which time a few humorous anecdotes were related to relieve the tension and thus keep the good will of the boys. They were told not to hurry but to work as rapidly as possible, for what we wanted in the replies was not a studied response but rather their first impressions which would reflect more accurately a reaction based on accumulated past experiences.

It is true, some failed to finish but this was provided for by having 120 in each school answer the problemmaire, while only 100, 25 from each level in the school, were used in our final results. The tedious process of studying each completed problemmaire for inconsistency of response brought a number of ejections on this score, but this lent an added reliability to the problemmaires used in our study. The remaining surplus problemmaires had to be eliminated by random ejections.

There is no doubt in the writer's mind that the boys almost without exception answered each question as truthfully as they possibly could and that consequently the data which is to be presented in the body of this work represent a true picture of the adolescent's view of the process of growing up. It is this point in particular which seems to give special value to the findings of this study, for adult attempts at appraisal of the adolescent's mind are too unreliable. As Leta Hollingworth says, "To have been an adolescent years ago is not necessarily or even probably to remember what it is to be an adolescent."[9] Or as Winifred Richmond points out, "for many of us, long before middle life is reached, adolescence has become an unknown land, a completely forgotten country."[10] We grown-ups have a tendency to throw the problems of our youth against a background of larger perspective thus causing them to shrink into insignificant proportions, while at the same time we remain more impressed by the fact that they have passed away than by the perturbation, since forgotten, which they caused us at the time.

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[9] *The Psychology of the Adolescent* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1928), vii.
[10] *The Adolescent Girl* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1925), 47.

Add to this the characteristic tendency of the adolescent to draw about himself a cloak of simulative exterior behavior in an effort to hide his real self and the void he feels within, and we begin to appreciate the necessity of knowing the adolescent from within as he sees himself and the world about him. Without such knowledge, our efforts at judging the adolescent are likely to be no more accurate than a layman's attempt to approximate the submerged part of an iceberg: both the adolescent and the iceberg offer only a part of themselves to our view, the larger and more important portion remaining hidden.

A Preview of the Boy's Needs as Revealed by His Problems

As the reader peruses the following pages in which 2000 adolescents give their views on some 200 vital questions, he will quite naturally come to the conclusion that while adolescents are by and large a wholesome lot, they nevertheless do have problems that puzzle them quite seriously at times. He will likewise be impressed with the fact that what adolescents want most of all is sincere and understanding sympathy at all times but especially when they fail to adjust themselves properly to their environment. This may be regarded as the modern adolescent's chief need.

Among the other more pressing needs of the adolescent which the ensuing findings will impress upon the reader is a need for more adequate guidance. This is reflected in the number of boys who are anxious about their vocation and who worry over problems of a personal nature, especially those of purity.

Third among the needs revealed by our study is a demand for a thorough reorganization of secondary education. Too many secondary schools persist in preparing adolescents for colleges they will never enter; too many hold content matter sacred and forget the larger objective of educating the living personality, of taking cognizance of individual differences, of helping the adolescent to form his life and character now, not merely stowing away in his memory facts to be applied only in years to come.

A fourth major need to which the problems of the adolescent point is an offshoot of the above need, namely, the provision and identification of opportunities in which the adolescent can put religion into action. Religion must be so taught that it can be taken out of the realm of memorized formulas and brought into the world of thought and action and applied to everyday life. It must be stressed as a life to be lived seven days of the week, twenty-four hours of the day. Too many of our adolescents tend to leave the moral code out of their social and recreational life; they have not been trained in applying religious principles to their leisure hours.

Detailed phases of these needs as well as the problems exemplifying them will be revealed in the following chapters as we permit the adolescents to speak for themselves.

Chapter 2

PROBLEM PATTERNS IN TYPICAL ADOLESCENTS

It is to be regretted that in analyzing any body of data as comprehensive and ponderous as ours on the problems of the adolescent boy, a manner of treatment must be devised whereby small units of the data are analyzed separately, apart from the total response situation of any one individual. Yet, this is the only practical way of analyzing and presenting such data. But in so doing, we lose sight of the individual color which the total situation lends to the interpretation of any response to any question. We likewise fail to get a true picture of the problems of any one adolescent.

No single response is wholly intelligible except in relation to its total setting; hence before we plunge into an analysis of our findings, it may be desirable to present the total responses of several adolescents with problems representative of the different types encountered in our study. While the reader thus has a synthesized view of several adolescents, he will appreciate at least in part the advantage of the writer in being able to study replies to single questions in the light of the individual's total responses. Of this vantage point the reader must be largely deprived because of the unfeasibility of presenting the entire content of responses of every adolescent whose responses we shall consider in this study. But this synthetic glance at several individual adolescents will furnish the reader with certain guiding lines for his own analysis of the data which we shall present in later chapters, and at the same time permit him to evaluate the reliability of our data and judge for himself the truthfulness of the answers as indicated by the consistency of response to various overlapping and interlocking questions.

The reader will note how the ability to interpret the boy's responses dawns upon him as he becomes progressively acquainted with the boy through the further consideration of his replies to additional questions. And it is only when one has followed the boy's answers to the end that one feels he is acquainted well enough with his background, attitudes, ideals, and motives to understand him and to pass judgment on his problems.

It might be well to remark that the papers here presented[1] are reproductions of the exact responses as submitted by individual boys with typical problems and not the specialized or composite answers

[1] Cf. *infra*, 27–39.

from many papers. Of course, the names chosen to represent the various individuals are fictitious and are used merely for the convenience of reference.

That the reader may appreciate how complete a picture of the boy's problems it is possible to obtain by the means we devised, we suggest that he follow the responses of one individual[2] through to the end rather than note the responses of all the individuals to a definite question.

A Boy With a "First-Love" Problem

The first paper to be presented is that of a sixteen-year-old junior with the fictitious name of Amo, whose life at present is dominated by one big problem, the uncertainty of his girl friend's love. His problem is characteristic of the boy in that stage of his social development where he falls in love for the first time. Amo is hit hard and his heart pounds heavily at the thought that a girl friend really cares for him. The octopus of first love has thrown its tentacles around his desires, his wishes, his ideal, his daydreams and has drawn them all together so that now his new love has become his one prepossessing thought. Like a newly found treasure it comes to its possessor, not without the accompanying fear of loss. And it is this fear that prompts Amo to worry about whether or not he will be able to retain the love of his girl friend.

He states that it is precisely this which is his biggest problem, and our analysis of his paper proves that it touches his life at almost every point. It is the subject of his fears, the cause of his occasional feelings of sadness and depression, and his greatest source of distraction when he tries to concentrate on his studies. And when it comes to a confidant for things that concern him intimately, it is to his girl friend that he turns. It is she likewise who figures in his ideal and about whom he daydreams, picturing himself as a hero before her eyes.

For the time being at least, this disturbance in his emotional life reaches into his home environment and is probably one of the contributing causes for his discontent there. It is apparently also the cause that prompts him, in stating his dissatisfaction with the way his parents try to guide him, to complain, "they baby me too much." Other factors, however, enter into his maladjustment at home, for he differs quite pointedly with his father on the question of money. A difference in the religious beliefs of his parents also has frequently caused him difficulties.

But for all that, he is fairly well adjusted. He is satisfied with his health, his character, his life, and feels that he understands himself quite well, believing he has more self-confidence than the average person. Socially, he gets along easily with others and feels understood

[2] Cf. *infra*, 27.

by everyone. In his school life, likewise, he gives evidence of almost perfect adjustment. His relations with his teachers are most satisfactory: not only does he feel that he is fitted for all the subjects he has to take but likewise that the school is actually preparing him for later life.

Amo is representative of the average boy only in so far as his responses regarding his love difficulties reflect the influence which a girl may have on the life of an adolescent who is caught in the throes of his first love. That adolescents at this stage in their development need sympathetic understanding without the least sign of ridicule is evident in Amo's final comment in which he seems to offer a defense for his frequent references to love, apparently with the hope of thereby staving off any possible ridicule. While thus maintaining that he is not "girl crazy," his problem is nevertheless uppermost in his mind for he ends by asking for the solution to a love problem which he fears may be his.

An Adolescent Who Says "They Don't Understand Me"

The next paper presented in its entirety is that of a sophomore, Pete, whose life is complicated and saddened because he feels that he is misunderstood. His frank answers give us an insight into how a problem of feeling misunderstood can reach into every phase of one's contacts and render life miserable. Fortunately, Pete is not representative of the average adolescent, but represents in the extreme that type of problem which was found to be present in a lesser degree in over half of the adolescents of this study.[3]

Pete has a higher degree of sensitivity than the average boy and hence he has a keen appreciation of the finer things of life. But because of this greater sensitivity, he makes greater demands upon those with whom he comes into contact and as these expectations are not met with he frequently feels rebuffed, with the result that he is driven to the thought that nobody understands him. It does not follow, however, that he is entirely to blame. Those with whom he comes into contact do not understand his character. Pete himself realizes this, for when asked why he feels misunderstood by everybody, he replies, "They don't understand my character." He feels that he is different from the average boy and states that he has different likes and interests; he offers this as the reason for his frequent feelings of loneliness.

The biggest personal problem in his life, he states, is his consciousness of not being understood. It is the subject of his doubts and the cause of his frequent periods of sadness and depression, which are evidences of the fact, which he himself admits later in the paper, that this problem pains him very much.

As a release from his dissatisfactions with reality in a cramping

[3] Cf. *infra*, 82–89; 216–220.

environment, he resorts to daydreaming, three hours daily, about a beautiful home and a great career on the stage. We are not surprised at this when we look at life through his eyes; nor are we surprised when he tells us that he finds his leisure time wearisome, and that he frequently worries about whether he is normal or not. We more or less expect this same desire of escape from the harshness of reality to color his ideal, and in this our expectation is correct.

What makes Pete's problem so poignant is the fact that he has no one to whom he can go for solace and comfort, no one to whom he can go because no one understands him. He feels misunderstood by his mother, brothers, and sisters and reasons that they "cannot comprehend the workings of a boy's mind." Yet, he emphasizes throughout his paper that what boys want most is "understandment," coming to a climax with the comment, "if only our school had an adviser, a man you would like and feel free to talk over your problems with."

We can be grateful that Pete's case is not typical of the majority of our adolescents, for he is maladjusted all around. Socially he finds difficulty in getting along with others; in school his unsatisfactory relations with his teachers make his life unhappy; in the home his mother's failure to understand him only serves to emphasize his feelings of deprivation. All combine to make him discouraged, dissatisfied with life as a whole, and a victim of frequent moods from which he finds it difficult to extricate himself. Nothing need be added to Pete's paper to emphasize the need of understanding and forbearance in the adult's relations with adolescents.

A careful analysis of his paper will give the reader some idea of the reliability of our method of investigation and of the possibility of detecting inconsistencies by comparing the responses of interlocking and check questions.

A Victim of a Bad Habit

The third problem case to be presented is that of Ray, a senior, who while not by any means typical of all adolescent boys, has a problem which is a source of trouble in the lives of many adolescents, namely, masturbation.

Scholastically, Ray is well adjusted and is happy in his school life, though not all his teachers are interested in him nor do all understand him. At home, too, he is fairly well satisfied though he thinks his father is old fashioned in some of his ideas. His social adjustment, however, is quite another story. He finds difficulty in getting along with others and in general feels that his interests are quite different from those of other boys of his age.

As in the two cases just presented, Ray's problem likewise dominates his life and becomes the subject of his worries, his doubts, his fears. It penetrates his thought life to such an extent that he regards impure thoughts as his greatest source of distraction when he tries to con-

centrate. He himself mentions that masturbation is the biggest problem in his life and that he is greatly worried about how to overcome it and its effects. Ray's reactions bear out Sherman's remark that the practice of masturbation proves a grave source of anxieties to the victim; he experiences a sense of guilt and feels that others can tell he resorts to this practice; he feels that others can detect it in his eyes or appearance and hence tries to avoid the looks of others. As a result unsocial traits sometimes develop.[4]

In analyzing Ray's responses, one cannot help noting a number of influences that may have a bearing on his difficulty. The reader's own analysis will suggest further influences. Perhaps at the root of his problem are his bad companions and the tainted source of his first information on sex which he says had a bad effect on him and caused him to lose confidence in his parents. He frankly admits that he continues to associate with his companions even though they meet with his parents' disapproval and frequently have a bad influence on him.

Another influential factor seems to be the motion pictures which he attends frequently. This seems to be particularly true both because of his preference for the love story type and because of the fact that motion pictures influence him very much, having frequently given him wrong ideas on sex, love, and petting.

Still another factor may be his poor social adjustment and consequent feelings of loneliness which prompt him to seek in solitude the satisfactions which he fails to find in his associations with his companions. Other influences may be his unsettled state of mind caused by the disagreement between the Church's teachings and certain popular ideas, his frequent moods and depressions which seem to fasten on him, and his frequent worrying about his difficulty which tends to emphasize his problem out of due proportion in his own mind.

The fact that he is dissatisfied with his character and that he feels he does not have much backbone does not help him either, for it may cause him to face his bad habit with somewhat of a defeatist attitude. Then, too, the fact that he appears to be of the emotional type, for he admits having frequently gone through the experience of a crush, is none too helpful; nor is the fact that his best girl friend, a non-Catholic, is a source of temptation to him in that she causes him to sin. Yet, a greater hindrance than all these to his efforts at overcoming his bad habit is his regular reading of salacious magazines which fire his imagination with immoral suggestions.

A not uncommon experience of boys with Ray's problem is their refraining from speaking about their difficulty in Confession. Ray says that he frequently refrains from asking about his difficulties because

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[4] Mandel Sherman, *Mental Hygiene and Education* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1935), 210.

he fears the priest knows him. Some boys suggested that priests would do a great service to the adolescent if a curtain were placed over the screen in the confessional or if some other means were taken to assure the adolescent, who is so naturally self-conscious and full of human respect, of his not being recognized by the confessor. Of course, the ideal would be to have the boy seek personal contact with the confessor outside the confessional so that in talking over the problem the confessor would become better acquainted with the case and thus be able to guide the boy the more effectively.

That which could be a redeeming feature in Ray's life, his frequent talks with his father about his intimate problems, turns out to prove a further source of difficulty, for he feels that his father does not understand him. As a result he discusses the things that concern him intimately with a girl friend. In the light of other remarks in his paper, this practice turns out to be just another source of difficulty for his big problem.

The extent to which his unhealthy attitude permeates his thinking is evidenced in his unlawful and sinful desires as manifested both in his wishes and in his daydreams. As if his case were not sufficient argument for an earlier and a more accurate instruction in purity in our schools, he adds a very blunt, yet pointed comment which speaks for itself.[5] The reader will readily agree with him when, earlier in his paper, he says that he feels he needs clearer instructions in this field.

A Boy Who Is Poorly Adjusted and Disgusted With Everything

In the fourth paper presented for our analysis, we have evidence of the importance of satisfactory home relations in the adolescent's life and the far-reaching and deleterious effects on his outlook on life when these relations are unsatisfactory. Jim, the subject of this problem-maire, at the early age of sixteen is "disgusted with everything." The youngest in his family, he is the victim of an apparently tyrannical discipline which keeps him in the house where he is nagged by misunderstanding parents, both of whom act coldly and indifferently toward him, give him no spending money, and do not permit him the social liberties which he feels are enjoyed by other boys of his age.

At the same time he feels that both his father and his mother are old fashioned in their ideas — his mother likewise in dress — and that they try to impose their own ideas and customs upon him. He feels that they are unreasonable in their demands, that he is overloaded with duties about the home, that they are expecting more from him than he can ordinarily accomplish, all with the result that he no longer feels proud of them nor would he be happy to have his friends see and meet them. As a matter of fact, he says, he fears rather than

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[5] Cf. *infra*, 38–39.

loves his father. There is hardly a remote possibility that parents under such circumstances will exert any wholesome influence over their son. And we are not surprised, as we become progressively acquainted with Jim, that he never takes any of his problems to his parents. Nor are we surprised at learning that he is so unhappy at home that he has contemplated running away. The degree of his dissatisfaction is somewhat reflected in the reason he offers for his disapproval of the way his parents try to handle him. In his opinion, they are "too damn strict and always growling," and they don't understand him because they "try to make the boys do as they did back in the sticks in the 1890's." The violent attitude apparent in this remark is perhaps partially explained by the boy's realization of the meager educational background of his parents: three years of school in the case of his father and four years in that of his mother.

The same attitude of disgust, created by an unsatisfactory home environment, colors almost every other phase of Jim's life. His school life is decidedly unhappy, not only because of partially unsatisfactory relations with teachers, but because his parents are forcing him to go to a school he does not wish to attend. Difficulties in his personal life are likewise rendered more acute. Not only is he somewhat discouraged, but he finds himself slipping into spells of moodiness and periods of sadness and depression which he attributes to the strict rules enforced in his home. Socially, his apparently satisfactory relation with his companions is one of the few bright spots in his life; but even this phase of his life is not entirely free from the disheartening shadow of his home for he frequently experiences periods of loneliness because he has to sit around the house doing nothing while others are having a good time.

Jim's unjust treatment at home, his deprivation of social privileges, is his biggest problem in life and the source of his worries. His problems could be considerably lessened if he had an understanding friend, but he has no real confidant, though he does approach his boy friends and girl friends with some of his problems. His confessor could be of help to him, but Jim is backward about bringing up his difficulties in the confessional, for he fears the priest knows him. Thus, the full weight of his problems is thrown back on himself. No wonder, weighted down with such difficulties, that he finds his leisure time wearisome. Naturally he seeks escape from his unhappiness and does so through association with his companions, through the movies, through drink, and through his daydreams in which he revels in thoughts of his girl friends and of the few good times he has had with them in the past. When asked why he frequently resorts to drink, he answers, "In order to forget my unhappiness and as a means of having a good time." As to the motion pictures, his other means of escape from the harsh realities of life, he considers them as an important guiding influence in his life because they show him how

to get a little fun out of his youth. He tells us that they taught him "the proper way to kiss and make love and make easy money."

But such wrong ideas of his are not gathered solely from the motion pictures for he claims he received his first information on sex from the street, from companions, from magazines which frequently influenced him to sin. It is this factor, too, which figures in his unsatisfactory relations with his parents for he says the poor way his parents handled the sex problem in his case caused him to lose confidence in them. That he is still under the influence of the wrong attitude developed by this first misinformation is evident in the way he usually regards sex at the present time, namely, as a source of thrills, lots of fun, and an ever present opportunity for pleasure. Further evidence of his wrong attitude on this subject is found in his statement that petting and necking are not wrong because they "violate no law of God."

His unwholesome attitudes carry over even to the way he regards his religion. Perhaps we cannot blame him altogether for regarding the religion course he is taking as impractical, nor for being so disgusted with it that he feels "fed up" with religion; but we can hardly agree with him when he states that religion is not a thing of joy, nor can we feel that he has the correct attitude when he questions whether religion is more of a help or a hindrance in his life. A still further analysis of Jim's paper would only serve to show the importance and the definite need in the adolescent's life of a sympathetic and understanding attitude on the part of parents. After reading through his long list of complaints, it is quite heartening to read at the end of his paper that he feels somewhat relieved now, for the writing out of his problems has made him feel that he "got them off his chest."

A Boy Who Is Lonely and Suffering From an Inferiority Complex

Our next adolescent problem pattern to be considered is that of Ed, an only child, who has the double problem, on the one hand of suffering from all the effects of an inferiority complex and consequently of not understanding himself, and on the other, because of a void in his affective life, of being consumed with a longing desire for a "female companion." These two problems, while appearing on the surface to be distinct, are perhaps not so unrelated as one at first might be led to believe.

Perhaps behind his ever recurring desire for a "female companion" there is something more than the mere manifestation of a natural interest at this time in the opposite sex and a desire for companionship; perhaps, though unconsciously, his heightened feelings of uncertainty regarding himself and his desire for security, power, and confidence are the driving motives behind his longing for a female friend. Could it not well be that with a companion of the weaker

sex he would find an opportunity to play the hero and domineer and thus build up in himself that feeling of self-confidence, the lack of which he feels so poignantly?

Undoubtedly, in the background of what Ed regards as his biggest problem in life lies his home environment. Being an only child he has been deprived of the healthful companionship of brothers and sisters and moreover feels that his parents at times are indifferent toward him. Add to that the fact that he feels he is not treated as a boy of his age should be treated, that his parents expect too much of him, that he is deprived of social liberties, that he has had frequent difficulties and occasional "fights" with his parents on matters of religion — his father whom he regards as old fashioned does not have any religion at all — the fact that all this has made him so unhappy that he has even thought of running away from home, and we can easily understand why a boy in such circumstances longs for a girl friend in whom he would like to confide.

Perhaps Ed's unsatisfactory relations in the home likewise lie at the root of his personality difficulties, for if one meets with conflict there, it can scarcely have any but a disintegrating effect upon one's own personal development.

Ed is quite conscious of his lack of self-confidence. He gives evidence of this in his ideal for he has chosen one who is the very embodiment of self-confidence, a star in the motion picture world. It is perhaps because of these feelings, of inferiority that he believes life is too complicated to understand what it is all about; it is likewise why he fears the responsibilities that await him when he grows up.

His poor personality adjustment is only too evident in his remarks that he easily becomes discouraged, that he is very conscious of his faults, that he frequently feels out of place because of a feeling of awkwardness which often causes him to shun others, that he often gets into moods when he cannot seem to cheer up, that he is frequently sad and "down in the mouth." These latter experiences, as he explains, are caused by a "lack of self-confidence." At the same time a consciousness of being shy causes him serious concern. It is little wonder then that he has serious doubts about himself and that he is frequently driven to wonder whether he is normal or not. Imagine the confusion created within him when he approaches his parents with his difficulties and, instead of getting an understanding hearing, receives a tirade on what they did and what they got when they were young.

But what makes matters worse, Ed is likewise poorly adjusted in his sex life; for, like so many other boys who are the innocent victims of neglected parents, his present attitude toward sex is that of "an ever present opportunity for pleasure." And this because he picked up his first information from the street, relatives, and companions. He admits that this had a very bad effect upon him. A

further statement of his confirms this fact, for he says he does not think necking or petting is wrong because "it is nature, you can't help it."

A Boy Whose Biggest Problem Is Purity

We now turn to consider a problem pattern, typically adolescent, which is presented by Bill, who, when asked what his biggest personal problem in life was, replied, "Right now it is purity. I find it hard to keep pure riding on crowded trains and buses and seeing so many arousing and exciting pictures in the papers. . . ." Bill is a senior whose paper is a study in frankness, sincerity, and good will. He wants to be pure, is motivated by high ideals, yet the temptations of the world and the flesh brush up against him so closely that his weak nature yields, despite his good will and high ideals.

The extent to which the problem of purity is uppermost in his mind is revealed by his frequent references to it throughout his paper. It colors his ideal; it is the substance of his wishes, the top-ranking cause of his occasional periods of sadness, a reason for his fears, and a subject about which he finds himself worrying frequently. What could be more indicative of sincerity, good will, and an earnest desire to overcome his difficulties than his wishes in which he asks for "holy purity; destruction of sexual thoughts; enough money for a college education; and a good girl who really loves me"?

The reader cannot help feeling a deep sympathy for Bill and his problem as he further reveals the wholesomeness of his inner motives when he writes at the beginning of his comment, "I wish I knew a way to overcome my sexual thoughts. If I knew this, I would feel more satisfied with life and be a better boy now and a better man in the future." And what reader will not heartily agree with the rest of his comment when he goes on to say, "I believe the Church would perform a great service if it in some way were to teach the 'facts of life' to us boys when we needed them. . . ."

In the light of the fact that his first information on sex was obtained from the street and his companions (tainted sources which he says had a bad effect on him, giving him a "wrong slant on these things"), there can be little doubt that much of the blame for his present difficulties can be laid to neglectful parents and other superiors who failed in their duty.

A redeeming factor in Bill's case is his fair adjustment in the other phases of his life. He is well adjusted socially, fairly well satisfied at home (though he does experience a number of difficulties in his relations with his parents), and in general does not have too many personality difficulties. Another saving feature is the fact that he asks about his difficulties in Confession and occasionally consults his mother about certain problems which he feels she understands. Bill's problem, let it be repeated, is the problem of only too many boys of adolescent age.

We turn now to a consideration of the last paper to be presented in its entirety. Thus far we have given the dark side of the picture of adolescent life. Every paper portrayed an adolescent whose life was poorly adjusted in one or more phases because this or that type of problem proved to be a disrupting influence in his life. We noted how a difficult problem in one field had a carry-over effect and usually rendered relations in all other fields more difficult.

A Well-Adjusted Boy With No Serious Problems

It is no more than proper that we present at least one paper which reflects an adolescent well adjusted in all the major phases of his life. For that reason we present a brief analysis of a typical adolescent, Joe, who is the picture of a well-adjusted boy with no really serious problem, yet who is not entirely free from minor difficulties. Joe comes from a very satisfactory home environment in which his relations with his parents are almost perfect. He feels that his parents are interested in him, yet not too much concerned about what he does to be a source of anxiety. They encourage him to bring his friends to his home and permit him the social liberties of other boys of his age. At the same time they set a time for him to be in at night and he conforms. He feels that both his father and his mother understand his difficulties and hence his dealings with them have been most satisfactory.

His school life, too, is a source of happiness. He gets along well with his teachers and feels that they are interested in him and understand him. Added to that, his parents frequently encourage him in his schoolwork.

In his social life likewise he is fairly well adjusted, rarely if ever being troubled with feelings of loneliness. The same accounts to a certain extent for his personality adjustments, for he is never troubled by feelings of awkwardness as is the average boy. But a few personal problems, such as a lack of self-confidence, shyness, and a dissatisfaction with his character do make themselves felt. This merely serves as an illustration of the point that no adolescent is entirely free from problems of adjustment which at some time or other become somewhat disconcerting. The question of his vocation is another problem which he apparently has not settled, but it does not really worry him very much for he is working out this problem with the advice of his mother and father.

The secret of Joe's almost perfect adjustment seems to lie in his satisfactory home relations. Note how his mother and father are his confidants in all his problems that concern him intimately and how he has chosen his "father, a good, clean man" as his life ideal. Had such favorable parent-son relations been maintained in the homes of the half-dozen adolescent problem types reviewed above, perhaps none of them would have been as intensely maladjusted as we found

them to be. There can be no doubt that the source as well as the adjustment of many of the adolescent's problems lies within the four walls of his own home.

Detailed Replies of Seven Typical Adolescents

We now present for the reader's own inspection and analysis the individual responses of the seven adolescents previewed above, together with their respective comments on the questions that we put to them in our problemmaire. Such details of our problem inventory as the form, the number of the question, and the multiple choice of answers preceding many of the questions have been omitted for the sake of economy of space. For the same reason the questions of our problemmaire are reproduced only once for the seven papers presented. Hence, to follow any individual's responses, the reader will ignore the responses in all other columns except those in the column of the boy with whom he wishes to become better acquainted.

Responses of Seven High-School Boys to Questions in the Problem Inventory

Directions Given in the Problemmaire

The purpose of this problemmaire is to give you boys in high school *a chance to tell us* — to tell all those who have charge of boys — what your problems are. By answering as truthfully as you can you will be helping thousands of boys in the future. *Do not sign your name to this paper.* All information is *strictly confidential;* so feel perfectly free to write what is on your mind. Neither your teachers nor anyone else at school will see these papers.

Most of the questions can be answered by *encircling* a *letter, word,* or *phrase;* however, for a few questions you must write out your answer.

Answer all questions one after another in order; don't skip around.

Amo (In Love)	Pete (Not Understood)	Ray (Masturbation Problem)	Jim (Disgusted, Poorly Adjusted)	Ed (Inferiority Complex)	Bill (Purity Difficulty)	Joe (Well Adjusted)	*Meaning of Symbols:* Y: *Yes* O: *Occasionally* R: *Rarely* YF: *Yes Frequently* N: *No, or Never* ?: *Uncertain*
16	15	18	16	15	16	15	Age?
3	2	4	2	2	4	2	Year in high school?
							Are you the oldest, second oldest, or youngest in your family: Amo: *second oldest;* Pete: *second youngest;* Ray: *second oldest;* Jim: *youngest;* Ed: *only child;* Bill: *youngest;* Joe: *oldest.*
y	n	y	y	y	y	y	Is your father living?
y	y	y	y	y	y	y	Is your mother living?
	9						If either parent is dead, how old were you when the loss occurred?
n		n	n	n	n	n	Are your parents separated (or divorced)?
4	8	3	3	1	4	2	Number of children in your family?
1	3	0	1	0	2	0	Number of older brothers?
0	3	1	1	0	1	0	Number of older sisters?
1	1	1	0	0	0	0	Number of younger sisters?
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Number of others besides your immediate family living in your home?
n	n	y	n	o	n	n	Is your mother gainfully employed outside the home?
n	y	n	y	y	y	n	Do financial troubles frequently create difficulties in your home?
n	y	y	n	n	n	n	Are some prayers said regularly in your home?
n	n	y	n	y	y	y	Have you a special place to study at home?
n	n	y	n	n	y	y	Are you satisfied with your home to the extent that you would never think of running away from home?
y	n	n	y	?	n	n	Are you overloaded with duties in or about your home?
r	yf	r	yf	yf	yf	r	Do you ever find yourself worrying about the financial condition of your family?
?	y	y	y	?	y	y	Is religion an important factor in the life of your family?
n	y	y	n	n	y	y	Are you usually happy when at home?
							If not, why not?

Amo: *My father thinks the only thing in life is money. I don't!*
Jim: *Because I am always kept in and nagged at. Everybody thinks I'm always doing the wrong thing.*
Ed. *My parents expect too much of me and my school mark quota is too high.*

Amo	Pete	Ray	Jim	Ed	Bill	Joe	*Meaning of Symbols:* Y: *Yes* O: *Occasionally* R: *Rarely* YF: *Yes Frequently* N: *No, or Never* ?: *Uncertain*
y	y	y	y	y	y	y	Are you living at home?
¾	¾	½	¾	½	sa	sa	How much of your leisure time do you spend at home: *All of it, ¾ of it, ½ of it, ¼ of it, scarcely any, none?*
n	n	n	y	n	n	n	Do you think there is too much discipline in your home?
a		c	b	c	c	a	Toward me my father is: (*a*) friendly and interested, (*b*) cold and indifferent, (*c*) at times friendly, at times indifferent.
a	a	c	b	c	a	a	Toward me my mother is: (*a*) friendly and interested, (*b*) cold and indifferent, (*c*) at times friendly, at times indifferent.
y	y	y	y	y	n	n	Do you think your parents are too much concerned and too careful about you and what you do?
y	n	y	n	y	n	y	Do you *usually* have some weekly spending money?
m	m	m	s	m	m	l	I regard my parents as: *strict, lenient, medium.*
y	y	y	n	o	o	y	Do your parents encourage you to bring your friends to your home?
y	n	y	n	n	y	y	Do you think you are allowed as many social liberties as other boys of your age?
	y		y	o			If not, do you argue for more liberty?
y	n	y	y	y	y	y	Do your parents set a time for you to be in at night?
yf		o	yf	yf	yf	yf	Are you in at that time?
o	n	n	n	n	n	y	Do you feel your parents treat you as a young man your age should be treated?
y	y	y	n	y	n	n	Do your parents give you opportunities to share responsibilities as much as you would like?
n		y	y	y	y	n	Do you think your father is old fashioned in some of his ideas?
n	y	n	y	n	y	y	Do you think your mother is old fashioned in some of her ideas?
n	n	n	y	n	n	n	Do you think your mother is old fashioned in dress?
n	n	n	y	y	n	y	Was your father born in this country?
y	n	y	y	y	n	y	Was your mother born in this country?
y	y	y	n	n	y	y	Do you feel so proud of your parents that you like to have your friends see and meet them?
ep	c	c	c	n	c	c	Your father's religion? (*N.B. c: Catholic; ep: Episcopalian;*
c	c	c	c	c	c	p	Your mother's religion? *n: none; p: Protestant*)
7	8	16	3	8	5	11	About how much education did your father have (in years)?
12	6	11	4	10	7	12	About how much education did your mother have?
n	y	n	y	y	y	n	Is your family frequently troubled with illness?
y		n	n	n	n	n	Is your father very nervous?
n	y	n	n	y	n	n	Is your mother very nervous?
n	y	n	n	y	n	n	Are you inclined to be nervous?
n	y	y	y	y	y	y	Do you worry easily?

What are the things you worry about most?

Amo: *I don't worry easily, but I do worry about making my girl friend and keeping her, and whether or not my girl's love for me will last or not.*
Pete: *About sickness, money, and wishing we were happy.*
Ray: *What I am going to do when I get out of school; masturbation; results of sexual intercourse.*
Jim: *About not getting enough liberties and about the way my brothers and sisters get everything.*
Ed: *Keeping peace in the family by keeping my marks up.*
Bill: *How to keep pure; my schoolwork; financial conditions at home.*
Joe: *Nothing too serious, but about my mother's and father's health, and about my girl friend's love.*

o		yf	yf	yf	yf	r	Do you ever feel "mad" at your father while at the same time you feel you must be loyal to him?
o	o	yf	yf	yf	yf	r	Do you ever feel "mad" at your mother while at the same time you feel you must be loyal to her?
r	o	yf	yf		yf	o	Do you ever feel "mad" at other members of the family while at the same time you feel you must be loyal to them?
n		n	y	n	n	n	Do you *fear* your father (obey him because you have to) rather than *love* him?
n	n	n	n	y	n	y	Do your parents approve of all your friends?
n	o	n	n		n		If not, do you stop going with them?

Amo	Pete	Ray	Jim	Ed	Bill	Joe	*Meaning of Symbols:* Y: *Yes* O: *Occasionally* R: *Rarely* YF: *Yes Frequently* N: *No, or Never* ?: *Uncertain*
yf	n	n	n	yf	n	n	Has a difference in the religious beliefs of your parents ever caused you any difficulties?
n	n	n	n	o	n	n	Have you ever had "fights" with your parents on matters of religion?
n	yf	yf	yf	yf	o	n	Do your parents try to impose on you their own ideas and customs?
y	n	y	y	y	y	n	Are you frequently scolded by either or both of your parents?
n		n	y	y	y	n	Do you think your father is sometimes unreasonable in his commands?
n	y	n	y	y	y	n	Do you think your mother is sometimes unreasonable in her demands?
n	y	y	y	?	n	n	Does your family expect more from you than you can ordinarily accomplish?
r		yf	n	r	r	r	Do you discuss your difficulties and personal problems with your father?
y		n	n	n	n	y	Do you feel your father understands your difficulties?
r	o	r	n	r	o	r	Do you discuss your difficulties and personal problems with your mother?
n	n	n	n	n	y	y	Do you feel your mother understands your difficulties?

What do you think are the reasons why boys are sometimes *misunderstood* by parents?

Amo: *Because mothers and fathers forget how they felt when they were young.*
Pete: *Because parents cannot comprehend the workings of a boy's mind.*
Ray: *They do not take enough interest in them. Conditions are different nowadays than when they were our age.*
Jim: *The parents try to make the boys do as they did back in the sticks in the 1890's, at least that's my case.*
Ed: *Because of the position of the boy in the home, he is afraid to confide in them and they thus misunderstand him.*
Bill: *Old-fashioned. Parents forget to put themselves in their children's place. They forget their own childhood and things they themselves liked. They realize we are grown up only after everyone else has.*
Joe: *The boys themselves have not the right ideas and obligations to their parents; expect too much from their parents always.*

y		y	n	n	n	y	Have your dealings with your father usually been satisfactory?
n	n	y	n	n	y	y	Have your dealings with your mother usually been satisfactory?
n	y	y	y	n	y	y	Do you understand the *reason why* a boy should obey his parents in everything (provided it isn't wrong)?
n	n	y	n	n	n	y	Do you approve of the way your parents try to guide you?

If not, what don't you like about their method?

Amo: *They baby me too much.*
Pete: *They don't go about it understandingly; expect impossible achievements.*
Jim: *Too damn strict and always growling.*
Ed: *They tell me what they had to do and what they got when they were young.*
Bill: *That's it, they don't.*

yf	o	yf	r	o	yf	yf	Do your parents encourage you and "pep you up" in your schoolwork?
y	n	n	n	y	y	y	Are you satisfied with your health?
y	n	n	y	n	n	n	Do you feel satisfied with your character?
y	y	y	y	n	y	y	Do you feel you understand yourself quite well?
y	n	y	n	n	y	y	Do you feel pretty well satisfied with the life you have to live?
n	y	?	n	n	y	n	Are you perfectly *clear* as to what is and what is not a sin in regard to purity?
y	y	y	y	y	n	y	Do you feel rather sure you know what *should be* the proper attitude toward sex?
y	n	y	n	n	y	y	Are you allowed out at night as often as you think a boy your age should be allowed out?

Amo	Pete	Ray	Jim	Ed	Bill	Joe	
							Meaning of Symbols: Y: *Yes* O: *Occasionally* R: *Rarely* YF: *Yes Frequently* N: *No, or Never* ?: *Uncertain*
y	y	y	y	y	n	n	Do you have any doubts as to what is allowed and what is not allowed when out on a date with a girl? *Ed adds: "Never was out with one."*
y	n	y	y	y	n	y	Do you feel you need clearer rules on what is sinful regarding impure thoughts, words, actions?
r	r	yf	r	yf	o	r	Have the movies ever given you wrong ideas about sex, love, and petting?
2	2	4	2	2	2	5	Check from which sources you obtained your *first information on sex:*
4	4		4	12	9	7	1. father 6. priest 11. teachers
7	5		5	9		9	2. the street 7. magazines 12. relatives
9	7		7				3. my brothers 8. mother 13. doctor
	9		9				4. books 9. companions 14. older people
							5. newspapers 10. movies 15. my sisters
							Did this information have a good or bad effect on you?

Amo: *Not so good at first but better now.*
Pete: *I think it had a bad effect. But since I got more information from good books and good magazines.*
Ray: *Bad effect, especially at first.*
Jim: *It influenced me to sin more frequently.*
Ed: *A very bad effect.*
Bill: *Bad — gave me wrong slant on these things.*
Joe: *A bad effect because it made me want to experience these things.*

?	y	y	y	?	?	n	Did you lose your confidence in your parents because of the way they handled the sex problem in your case?
2	4	10	2	4	2	9	Check from which sources you have *since* obtained information
4	7	11	4	5	3		on sex:
7			5	7	4		1. father 6. priest 11. teachers
9			7	10	7		2. the street 7. magazines 12. relatives
*			9	14	9		3. my brothers 8. mother 13. doctor
			10		10		4. books 9. companions 14. older people
							5. newspapers 10. movies 15. my sisters
							*girls
5	?	3	3	7	3	3	Whenever the thought of *sex* comes to my mind. I *usually* find
8		9	4		4	4	myself regarding it as: (*Check which.*)
			7		7	7	1. something mysterious 6. something dirty and vulgar
						8	2. something fearful 7. an ever present opportunity for pleasure
							3. lots of fun
							4. a source of thrills 8. something sacred
							5. a power of creation we share with God 9. something disgusting
							10. something that puzzles me
?	n	y	y	?	y	?	Do you think it is part of the routine of going out with a girl to "pet" and "neck"? *Yes, No, Uncertain.*
							Do you think it is necessary for popularity?

Amo: *No, I consider it proper only if you love her.*
Pete: *Yes, I think so.*
Ray: *No, but for your own pleasure you do it.*
Jim: *Yes, because the boy who doesn't neck a girl will never get another date.*
Ed: *No, not necessarily.*
Bill: *Depends on type of people you want to be popular with. On the whole I'd say no. Girls admire a clean, steadfast boy much better than a sinful one.*
Joe: *No, not always but it helps.*

Do you think that girls expect it of you?

Amo: *If she loves you, yes, otherwise no.*
Pete: *Yes, most girls are desirous of it I think.*
Ray: *No, but some do, and we like it. Most of the girls like it.*

Jim: *Yes, at least most of them I have taken out do.*
Ed: *Of this I am not certain. No experience.*
Bill: *Some do, some don't. I think the average likes it and expects a little, but not the kind of a girl I want to marry.*
Joe: *Yes, sometimes, some girls do and some don't. If they like you they usually expect it. But the right kind of a girl will not permit petting.*

Do you think it is sinful?

Amo: *Positively no, because in a way it shows affection.*
Pete: *Yes, I do.*
Ray: *Not in some cases, not if you like one another.*
Jim: *No, it violates no law of God.*
Ed: *No, I do not. It is nature, you can't help it.*
Bill: *Kissing and petting are not sinful when under control. When it becomes sinful a boy or girl usually knows it.*
Joe: *No, it depends upon how far you carry the things: it will lead to sin eventually, by degrees as one gets bolder.*

Amo	Pete	Ray	Jim	Ed	Bill	Joe	*Meaning of Symbols:* Y: *Yes* O: *Occasionally* R: *Rarely* YF: *Yes Frequently* N: *No, or Never* ?: *Uncertain*
r	yf	yf	r	o	yf	o	Do you worry much over sex (purity) difficulties?
y	y	y	n	n	y	o	Do you like to go to Confession?
							Do you refrain from asking about *all* your difficulties in Confession:
n	yf	yf	yf	yf	n*	n	Because you fear the priest knows you?
n		n		n	n	n	Because you fear the conversation will be overheard?
n		n		yf	n	n	Because others may think you peculiar if you stay in too long? **Bill adds: "I do ask."*
y	n	y	n	?	y	y	Do you feel that Confession *definitely* helps you in dealing with your problems?
r	yf	yf	yf	yf	n	r	Do you go to Confession because someone *tells you to go* (rather than because you yourself want to)?
y	y	y	o	y	y	y	Do you like to go to Holy Communion?
							What is your biggest personal problem or difficulty in life (what worries or troubles you most)? (If you haven't any, write: *"None."*)

Amo: *How I can retain the love my girl friend has for me. My biggest trouble is that I'm in love and I worry about it all the time.*
Pete: *Happiness, how to have it, and being not understood.*
Ray: *Masturbation, how to overcome it, will it hurt me if practiced not too frequently?*
Jim: *Not being able to go out with other boys and doing as they do, and inability to get treated like a man around the house.*
Ed: *Finding a female companion because I would like to confide in her.*
Bill: *Right now it is purity. I find it hard to keep pure riding on crowded trains and buses and seeing so many arousing and excitable pictures in the papers. As a result I resort to frequent masturbation.*
Joe: *None.*

n	o	n	o	yf	n	o	Have you ever felt that life is too complicated to understand what it is all about?
r	yf	o	o	yf	o	r	Do you easily become discouraged?
							What are the things you fear most? (If nothing, write: *"Nothing."*)

Amo: *Loss of my girl friend's love.*
Pete: *Sickness and unhappiness.*
Ray: *What will be the result of masturbation?*
Jim: *Nothing.*
Ed: *Dying in God's displeasure.*
Bill: (1) *Death in state of mortal sin,* (2) *failure in the world,* (3) *that I won't be able to break away from impurity.*
Joe: *Hell and becoming a physical invalid.*

Amo	Pete	Ray	Jim	Ed	Bill	Joe	*Meaning of Symbols:* Y: *Yes* O: *Occasionally* R: *Rarely* YF: *Yes Frequently* N: *No*, or *Never* ?: *Uncertain*
o	n	yf	yf	o	n	n	Do the things you hear from others ever cause you to question certain things in your religion?
3	1	4	3	3	3	3	Do you worry about conditions in the world? (1) *very much,* (2) *somewhat,* (3) *a little,* (4) *not at all.*
y	n	y	y	n	y	y	Do you fear the responsibilities that await you when you are grown up?
o	yf	yf	yf	yf	?	o	Do you ever have serious doubts about things that you feel are rather important? If so, what are the things you usually have doubts about?

Amo: *Religious matters once in a while, and if divorce is right or wrong.*
Pete: *My vocation or career and why nobody understands me.*
Ray: *Certain things in religion and will masturbation practiced not too frequently hurt you?*
Jim: *A few religious teachings, about what I will be, and how my strict youth will hinder me.*
Ed: *Myself, personal affairs, disputes in the family.*
Joe: *Nothing of importance, but I usually have doubts about my financial standing in the family.*

n	o	o	yf	o	n	o	Have you ever been puzzled over the *disagreement* between the teaching of the Church on what is sinful and *certain popular ideas*?
y	y	y	n	?	n	y	Did you have a happy childhood?
y	n	y	n	o	o	y	Is your life at present happy?
y	y	y	y	y	y	y	Do you have an ideal or hero? If not, are you much concerned about not having one? Who is your hero or ideal?

Amo: *Live a happy married life with the one I love like a party I know.*
Pete: *My ideal in acting is Nelson Eddy and my hero and love is Deanna Durbin.*
Ray: *One of my fellow students, a strong healthy boy.*
Jim: *A number of boys who get to go out where and when they please.*
Ed: *Andy Hardy of the movies* (*Mickey Rooney*).
Bill: *My ideal is one who is a good father and husband with enough money for a good family to live on.*
Joe: *My father, a good clean man.*

y	n	y	y	n	y	n	Do you feel you have more self-confidence than that of a good many people?
o	yf	yf	yf	yf	n	o	Do you get into moods when you can't seem to cheer up to save yourself?
n	o	yf	o	yf	o	yf	Do you feel so conscious of your faults that you can't enjoy anything?
n	yf	yf	n	o	o	o	Do you feel as though you don't have much backbone of your own?
o	yf	yf	yf	yf	o	o	Do you ever feel sad and depressed or "down in the mouth"? If so, what generally causes this feeling?

Amo: *My girl friend. Afraid someone is beating my time with her.*
Pete: *Lack of Understandment.*
Ray: *Don't know — just plain life, monotony of school and everyday life.*
Jim: *Conditions in my home and strict rules in force at home.*
Ed: *Lack of self-confidence.*
Bill: *Impurity; bad marks in school; conditions at home, financial and mental.*
Joe: *Fear that I have offended my parents and sometimes God.*

r	yf	yf	r	o	r	o	Do you find difficulty in making friends and "getting along" easily with others?
yf	yf	yf	r	r	r	r	Since the eighth grade, have you ever had a "crush" on (fell in love with) a teacher or *older* person?
n	yf	yf	n	yf	n	n	Have those whom you go arouad with ever had a bad influence on you?
n	y	n	n	n	n	n	Do most of the boys you go with ever look upon a boy who doesn't use bad language as a "sissy"?

Amo	Pete	Ray	Jim	Ed	Bill	Joe	*Meaning of Symbols:* Y: *Yes* YF: *Yes Frequently* O: *Occasionally* N: *No, or Never* R: *Rarely* ?: *Uncertain*
y	y	y	n	n	n	y	Do you frequently feel that the things you are interested in are quite different from those others are interested in?
r	yf	yf	yf	yf	r	r	Are you ever bothered by feelings of loneliness? If so, what do you think are the causes?

Pete: *I am different and like different things than other boys.*
Ray: *Too much work and not enough play.*
Jim: *My having to sit around the house not doing a thing while others are having good times.*
Ed: *Well, I have no female friend. It's because I'm backward.*

y	n	y	n	n	y	y	Do you feel that on the whole you are as successful as the average boy?
	y		y	y			If not, does this cause you serious mental struggle?
	n		n	n			Do you know how to overcome these mental struggles?
yf	yf	yf	o	r	yf	r	Do you think high-school boys ever get jealous of other boys who are leaders?
n	y	n	y	y	y	n	Have you *frequently* "felt out of place" because of a feeling of awkwardness?
	o		o	yf	yf		Have you shunned others because of this?
o	yf	yf	r	yf	r	yf	Does being shy cause you serious concern?
r	yf	r	r	yf	o	o	Have you ever worried about whether you were normal or not?
y	n	n	n	n	n	y	Do you feel everybody seems to understand you?
	2,3,	1	1	1	1		If not, by whom aren't you understood? (*Check which.*)
	4,5,	2	3	2	2		1. father 5. relatives 9. older people
	6,7,	4	4	4			2. teachers 6. my brothers 10. by nobody
	8,9,		2	5			3. my sisters 7. boy friends
	10						4. mother 8. girl friends
							What do you think is the main reason why a boy at times is *not understood* by his boy friends, girl friends, older people.

Amo: *He does not deal truthfully with them.*
Pete: *They don't understand my character.*
Ray: *It is very hard to say. Older people forget they were our age once.*
Jim: *Different ideas than his parents. They think, "a child with a child's mind."*
Ed: *He's not understood by elders because while with them he feels out of place and acts peculiar.*
Bill: *He is not entirely frank with them and holds back certain things.*
Joe: *Because they have not the same views on life.*

3	1	2	1	1	3	4	If you feel you are frequently misunderstood, does this puzzle or pain you? (1) *very much,* (2) *somewhat,* (3) *a little,* (4) *not at all.*
y	y	?	y	?	y	?	Do you feel you are attractive to girls?
yf	n	o	o	n	o	yf	Do you go out with girls?
							Do girls help or hinder you in your spiritual life?

Amo: *Help me.*
Pete: *Neither.*
Ray: *Hinder me a lot. Cause me to sin.*
Jim: *Help very much I think.*
Ed: *Hinder.*
Bill: *Sometimes one hinders me, but usually they do not affect me.*
Joe: *They don't hinder me.*

Do girls help or hinder you in your studies?

Amo: *Help me so as not to be disgraced.*
Pete: *Neither.*
Ray: *No, I study well.*
Jim: *Hinder a little.*
Ed: (No answer.)
Bill: *They never affect my studies.*
Joe: *They don't bother me in the least.*

Amo	Pete	Ray	Jim	Ed	Bill	Joe	*Meaning of Symbols:* Y: *Yes* O: *Occasionally* R: *Rarely* YF: *Yes Frequently* N: *No, or Never* ?: *Uncertain*
y	n	n	y	?	n	y	Do your parents or the parents of your girl friend encourage your visiting her in the home?
n	s	y	s	s	y	y	Are your best boy friends Catholic? *Yes, No, Some.*
s	s	n	n	*	y	y	Are your best girl friends Catholic?* **Ed adds: "I haven't got a girl."*
n	n	n	n	n	n	y	Do you think the school provides sufficient opportunities for boys and girls to get together socially?
n	yf	n	yf	o	yf	yf	Do you find a "lack of finances" a serious difficulty in your social activities?
n	n	y	n	n	n	y	Do you think your parish provides sufficient social "get-togethers" for boys and girls?
n	n	n	yf	n	n	n	Do you drink anything stronger than beer when out with your friends?
							If so, what is your main reason for so doing?

Pete: *I don't care for anything but milk.*
Jim: *To have a good time and forget the unhappiness I mentioned before.*

s	y	n	y	?	s	n	Do the girls you go out with approve of a boy's drinking liquor? *Yes, No, Some, Uncertain.*
s	y	n	s	?	n	n	Do the boys you go with encourage you to drink liquor?
n	n	n	n	?	n	n	Has drinking liquor ever brought you any difficulties or bad effects?
r	yf	r	yf	yf	r	r	Do you ever find leisure time wearisome?
4	6	4	4	2	4	2	How much time per day do you generally spend in daydreaming?
							1. 5–10 min. 5. 2 hrs. 9. 6 hrs. or more
							2. 15–20 min. 6. 3 hrs. 10. none
							3. half hour 7. 4 hrs.
							4. 1 hr. 8. 5 hrs.
							What do you most frequently catch yourself daydreaming about?

Amo: *My girl friend and being a hero in her eyes. She lives 250 miles from here and I have loved her for 6 months.*
Pete: *About a beautiful home and my great career (singing in drama).*
Ray: *Different women — one is married, but I always wish I could have her. I dream about her.*
Jim: *About girls, or about myself and some good times I had.*
Ed: *A female companion, a dangerous occupation.*
Bill: *Girls and how and when I'll take them and see them.*
Joe: *I usually daydream about my girl friend.*

o	yf	yf	o	yf	o	o	Do you enjoy reading during your leisure time?
y	**y**	y	y	y	n	y	Do you think your reading influences you very much?
							What are the topics most frequently talked about among boys?

Amo: *Sex, sports, girls, future plans.*
Pete: *Sex, sports, I wouldn't know.*
Ray: *Sexual intercourse, girls, impurity.*
Jim: *Girls, sports, occupation in later life.*
Ed: *Sports, themselves, and their girls.*
Bill: *Girls, sports, miscellaneous happenings.*
Joe: *Sports, girls, school.*

If you could have 3 wishes granted, what would you ask for?

Amo: (*a*) *Heaven when I die,* (*b*) *love of my girl friend,* (*c*) *happy married life.*
Pete: (*a*) *A career of singing in drama,* (*b*) *a beautiful home,* (*c*) *to be healthy.*
Ray: (*a*) *The grocer's wife,* (*b*) *my uncle's girl friend,* (*c*) *a Packard 8.*
Jim: (*a*) *More money,* (*b*) *better parents,* (*c*) *more luck with girls.*
Ed: (*a*) *A happy death,* (*b*) *a female companion,* (*c*) *a sense of confidence and security.*
Bill: (*a*) *Holy purity, destruction of sexual thoughts,* (*b*) *enough money for a college education,* (*c*) *a good girl who really loved me.*
Joe: (*a*) *A car,* (*b*) *money enough,* (*c*) *happiness and heaven.*

Name the magazines you read regularly (mention in the order of preference):

Amo: *Field and Stream, Outdoor Life, Life, Look, Colliers.*
Pete: *Etude, American Home, Sports, Newsweek.*
Ray: *Minicam, Spicy Stories, Popular Mechanics.*
Jim: *Look, Life, Focus, Popular Science and Mechanics.*
Ed: *Argosy, Skipper, Reader's Digest.*
Bill: *I read none regularly but I like "Life."*
Joe: *Boy's Life, Colliers, Saturday Evening Post.*

Amo	Pete	Ray	Jim	Ed	Bill	Joe	*Meaning of Symbols:* Y: *Yes* YF: *Yes Frequently* O: *Occasionally* N: *No, or Never* R: *Rarely* ?: *Uncertain*
2	1	2	8	1	1	2	How often do you usually go to the movies? 1. 1 a week 2. 2 a week 3. 3 a week 4. 4 a week 5. 5 a week 6. 1 a month 7. 2 a month 8. 3 a month 9. very rarely 10. never
							Why do you go to the movies?

Amo: *For amusement.*
Pete: *I analyze the acting. I love the singing of Deanna Durbin and Nelson Eddy.*
Ray: *To lessen the monotony of life.*
Jim: *To see the pictures and walk some girl home afterward.*
Ed: *For enjoyment.*
Bill: *Merely as a means of enjoyment and relaxation.*
Joe: *To spend my leisure time and to see my girl friend.*

1 3 4 5	6 7 8 9	4	1 2 3 4	7	2	1 5	Check the *kind* or *type* of movie you like best: 1. Mystery 2. Ganster-G Men 3. Western 4. Love Story 5. News 6. Travel 7. Historical 8. Educational 9. Musical Comedy 10. "Comedy of Manners" 11. No preference
s	s	ym	s	ym	s	?	Have the movies ever influenced your conduct, actions, or way of thinking? *Yes much, somewhat, not at all, uncertain.*
							If so, in what way?

Amo: *Make me curious to know certain things, especially about love and women.*
Pete: *I copy accents; learn how to dress, act, and talk. Very beneficial.*
Ray: *You want to be like them, do as they do — have them for contemporaries.*
Jim: *In the proper way to kiss and make love and make easy money.*
Ed: *Well, in making me try to be like them. Become a bit politer.*
Bill: *In my actions, in my manners, also my understanding and ideas.*
Joe: (No answer.)

yf	o	yf	o	o	yf	yf	After seeing a movie, do you come away as satisfied with your condition in life as before you went in?
n	n	n	o	n	n	n	Have the movies ever lessened your respect for authority.
n	y	n	y	y	n	?	Do you feel the movies are an important guiding influence in your life?
							Why?

Amo: *Most of them are not food for thought.*
Pete: *They broaden me and satisfy my love of beauty.*
Ray: *After all it is just a movie.*
Jim: *Shows one how to get a little fun out of his youth.*
Ed: *Well, one tries to be like the person he sees. Teach one about life.*
Bill: *Because I do not base my actual life on what I see there. I merely go for entertainment.*
Joe: (No answer.)

n	n	y	n	y	n	n	Have you settled the question of your future lifework?
yf	yf		o		yf	r	If you haven't, do you worry much about it?
n	n	n	n	n	n	n	Has the school helped you toward settling the question of your future lifework?
y	n	y	y	y	n	y	Have you sought guidance from anyone regarding your future lifework?

Amo	Pete	Ray	Jim	Ed	Bill	Joe	*Meaning of Symbols:* Y: *Yes* YF: *Yes Frequently* O: *Occasionally* N: *No, or Never* R: *Rarely* ?: *Uncertain*
1		1	6	1		1	From whom have you sought guidance? (*Check which.*)
*		2	9	3		2	1. father 5. priest 9. other friends
		3					2. mother 6. my brothers 10. none
							3. teachers 7. boy friends
							4. relatives 8. my sister
							**Amo adds: "Girl friend."*
y	n	y	?	n	y	y	Have you someone with whom you can talk over your intimate problems confidentially?
yf		yf			o	yf	If so, have you ever consulted this person?
							If not, why haven't you?

Pete: *Nobody understands me.*
Bill: *Rather delicate question to bring up to my sister.*

To whom do you most frequently go to get advice and talk over things that concern you intimately?

Amo: *My girl friend, but when she is away, my boy friend.*
Pete: *I have nobody to go to.*
Ray: *A girl friend, and my father.*
Jim: *Boy friends and girl friends, depending on what the problem is.*
Ed: *That's the trouble, if I only had gumption to go to someone maybe they could tell me what's wrong with me.*
Bill: *My sister.*
Joe: *My father and mother.*

o	yf	yf	o	yf	r	yf	Do you worry much about being able to find a job later on?
5	7	5	3	4	5	6	Check one of the following which best describes how you *most frequently* feel about your future:
							1. discouraged 4. worried 7. resigned
							2. enthusiastic 5. doubtful 8. disgusted
							3. indifferent 6. hopeful
y	n	y	n	o	n	y	Is your school life happy?
1	3	1	2	3	3	1	I am going to school because: (*Check one.*)
							1. Both my parents and I desire it. 2. Someone is making me go. 3. I desire to go.
yf	o	yf	o	yf	o	yf	Do you feel your teachers treat you fairly?
yf	r	yf	o	yf	yf	o	Do you feel your teachers are reasonable in their demands for homework?
yf	o	yf	o	yf	yf	yf	Do you get along well with your teachers?
n	y	y	y	?	y	y	Do you feel some of your teachers could be more helpful than they are?
y	n	n	n	n	n	y	Do you feel all of your teachers are interested in you and your work?
y	n	n	n	n	n	y	Do you think all of your teachers understand your difficulties?
							What do you think is the reason why some teachers *misunderstand* boys?

Amo: *Boys are all different and teachers are too busy to take out time to know them.*
Pete: *They don't think a boy is capable of appreciating the finer things.*
Ray: *Some of them are too old to teach, and too nervous and irritable, old fashioned.*
Jim: *Because of the difference in principles.*
Ed: *Because they pay little attention to the boy's personal affairs.*
Bill: *They misjudge certain actions and rely too much on the action and not enough on the motive.*
Joe: *A teacher usually does not know the conditions a boy is faced with.*

n	n	y	?	n	y	n	Do you have the opportunity to speak to your teachers about your personal problems?
		y	n		n		If you have this opportunity, do you make use of it?
							If not, why don't you use it?

Jim: *Because I don't like to tell them too much.*
Bill: *I would feel embarrassed and self-conscious in the classroom afterward.*

Amo	Pete	Ray	Jim	Ed	Bill	Joe	*Meaning of Symbols:* Y: *Yes* O: *Occasionally* R: *Rarely* YF: *Yes Frequently* N: *No, or Never* ?: *Uncertain*
n	n	n	?	y	n	n	Do you think your teachers would betray your confidence if you spoke to them about such personal matters?
y	y	n	y	n	y	n	Do you *fear* some of your teachers, rather than *love* and *revere* them?
2,5	2	1	11	3	5	2	I feel all of my teachers are: (*Check what you agree with.*)
4,6	5	3	12	8	6	3	1. kind 8. even tempered
7,8	6	4		12	11	4	2. patient 9. interested in me
9,10	11	5		13	12	5	3. friendly 10. impartial (have no pets)
11	12	6			13	6	4. fair 11. able to teach
12	13	11				9	5. intelligent 12. persons with a sense of humor
13		10				10	6. helpful 13. good disciplinarians
		13				12	7. understanding
N	B	U	U	H	U	N	When thoughts of your studies occur to you, do happy or unhappy thoughts *usually* come to mind? *Happy, Unhappy, Both, Neither.*
*	5	8	4	1	3	1	What distracts you most when trying to concentrate?
					4	2	1. girls 4. noise 7. people talking
							2. sports 5. troubles 8. impure thoughts
							3. radio 6. future plans 9. social activities
							**Amo adds: "A girl."*
o	r	yf	r	o	yf	r	Are you satisfied with the marks you get in school?
n	n	yf	o	n	yf	yf	Does getting low marks depress you seriously?
o	yf	r	yf	yf	r	r	Does insistence on "high marks" disgust you (rather than encourage you)?
y	y	y	y	o	n	y	Do you have regular work to do after school or on week ends?
y	o	y	o	n		o	Does this work interfere with your studies?
ofs	f	ofs	ofs	ofs	s	s	In my studies I regard myself as: *successful, only fairly successful, failing.*
4	1	6	6	4			If you are failing in some of your studies, what do you think
6	3						are the reasons? (*Check which.*)
	5						1. am not bright enough 7. have a teacher who is
	6						2. had poor foundation prejudiced
							3. have poor teacher 8. have extracurricular activ-
							4. am not interested ities which interfere
							5. have a teacher who doesn't 9. don't know
							understand me 10. other
							6. have to work after school
							Mention the difficulties or problem in your school life that puzzles you most: (If you haven't any, write: *"None."*)

Amo: *How I can be interested in my schoolwork when I'm in love at the same time.*
Pete: *Failing because of not being understood by teachers, and the different attitudes of the boys at school.*
Ray: *None.*
Jim: (No answer.)
Ed: *Getting interested in my studies.*
Bill: *One of my teachers at times is very mean and makes me feel embarrassed and foolish. He also has slapped me and professes his dislike for me.*
Joe: *None.*

n	yf	yf	n	yf	yf	o	Do you worry over your studies?
r	r	yf	o	o	yf	r	Does the radio interfere with your studies?
n	y	n	n	y	n	y	Do you feel you lack self-confidence?
n	n	n	n	n	n	n	Do you feel you have to participate in any school activities outside of studies which hinder you in any way?
							Name these activities and in what way they hinder you:

Jim: *I don't go out for any sport at all. Disgusted with everything.*
Joe: *I don't have to; but I do. Football. I have to practice every evening.*

Amo	Pete	Ray	Jim	Ed	Bill	Joe	*Meaning of Symbols:* Y: *Yes* O: *Occasionally* R: *Rarely* YF: *Yes Frequently* N: *No, or Never* ?: *Uncertain*
n	y	y	n	y	?	n	If you lack ability to participate in certain activities, does this bother you much?
							For which activities do you lack ability to participate?

Pete: *Sports.* Ray: *Football.* Ed: *Social activities.*

y	y	n	n	n	y	y	Do you have sufficient opportunities to participate in activities you are interested in?
y	n	y	n	y	y	y	Do you feel you are well fitted for all the school subjects you have to take?
	3		3				If not, for which subjects aren't you fitted?
	4		7				1. Mathematics 5. German 9. Commercial subjects 2. English 6. French 10. Most of them 3. Latin 7. Religion 11. Others 4. Science 8. History
n	n	n	n	n	n	n	Do you feel there is sufficient explanation of sex and purity in your school?
n	n	y	n	y	y	y	Do you find your religion course practical enough, i.e., easy to apply to your everyday life?
y	n	n	y	n	n	n	Do you think there is too much religion in your school and as a result feel "fed up" on it?
n	n	n	?	n	n	n	Do you feel religion is more of a hindrance than a help in your life?
n	n	n	y	y	y	y	Is "how to learn to appreciate the Mass" one of your problems?
y	y	y	n	n	n	y	Do you think your parish offers you sufficient opportunities for personally engaging in Catholic Action activities?
y	y	y	n	n	y	y	Do you think your *school* offers you sufficient opportunities for personally engaging in Catholic Action activities?
y	y	y	n	n	?	y	Honestly, do you feel that religion is a *joyful* thing?
y	y	y	y	y	y	n	Do you feel you have to take subjects which won't do you any good later on?
7	3	3	2	5	3		If so, encircle which ones:
9	8	12	3		5		1. Algebra 8. Physics 15. American history
13	9		6				2. Geometry 9. Chemistry 16. Shorthand
	10						3. Latin 10. General science 17. Typing
							4. German 11. English literature 18. Bookkeeping
							5. French 12. English grammar 19. Other
							6. Religion 13. Ancient history
							7. Church history 14. Modern history
y	n	y	n	y	n	y	Have you always found *agreement* between what you learned in the grades and what you learned later?
	n		n		n		If not, did this puzzle you much?
y	n	y	n	n	n	y	Do you think your school is preparing you to meet life's problems and to earn your living later on?
							We would like to have you *mention* here any problem of yours which has been omitted in these questions; we further ask you to *make any comment* you would care to add:

Amo: *You may think I am girl crazy, but I am not. I love one girl and her alone. I hope our love never dies. You may think I am rather young* (he is 16) *to know much about these things. I am 6 feet 2 inches tall, weigh 210 pounds, perfect health in every way and I look and think like a man of twenty. Have always associated with older people. But if I am certain of the girl I love and don't think I will get her, how should I act?*

Pete: *People don't realize that boys are capable of deep and beautiful appreciation of life's finer things. Boys want understandment! If only our school had an adviser, a man you would like and feel free to talk over your problems with.*

Ray: *None of the teachers* (taught by men) *talk on masturbation, its evils and its harms. I think that every boy over twelve has trouble in this line. . . . Therefore, I personally think that this subject should be discussed and talked over with every pupil. It always puzzles me why they don't talk on it when they know themselves that every mature boy is inclined to do it. Most of*

the boys do not know how harmful it is, and do not know it is a serious sin! So please, if you have anything to do about this, act immediately and instruct these ignorant boys! Another thing that this school should have is a dancing class, because the boys come right from a grammar school and never have the opportunity to learn. I think this is an important social doing and everybody here should learn. Please do what you can so these matters will be improved in our school.

Jim: *I don't like my home or school* (1) *because of my strict and nagging parents at home, and* (2) *because I was forced to come to this school and am disgusted with things as they now stand both at school and at home. I have tried to answer truthfully all the questions and I enjoyed it very much because I have been able to get my problems off my chest.*

Ed: *If a boy has good looks, good build, but lacks self-confidence and ability in securing a female friend, what should he do?*

Bill: *I wish I knew a way to overcome my sexual thoughts. If I knew this, I would feel more satisfied with life and be a better boy now and a better man in the future. I believe the Church would perform a great service if it were in some way to teach the "facts of life" to us boys when we needed them.*

Also that the Church or school should attempt to bring together boys and girls more frequently in healthy, wholesome circumstances, instead of on street corners. This is the most urgent need of our generation. We need to know what is for and against purity, and then we should be helped to act for purity by sponsoring clubs, etc., to bring Catholic boys and girls together.

Also, the Church's stand on all contemporary questions should be given to us, so that we would know where we stand. I realize that magazines such as America, The Sign, *etc., do this. But the campaign ought to be carried into the school.*

Therefore, to sum up, we need Catholic sex education, we need people (parents, teachers, priests) to whom we can go and speak without self-consciousness. Parents especially should be told to realize when we have grown up and to teach and to treat us accordingly.

Still summing up, our religion should be shown to us in such a way that it becomes real. It should be applied to everyday life, and the stand of the Church should be given. Then we would know where we stand, and religion would be a living force.

But the first and foremost problem, I repeat, remains purity. Teach us what it is, its pitfalls and how to overcome them. Then give us people to whom we can go.

Joe: *I found this questionnaire very interesting because it was the first opportunity that I had to really truthfully and honestly write what I think of life. And I thank you for giving me this opportunity.*

The boys' responses speak for themselves. We must be careful, however, not to draw our conclusions from these individual papers. These papers merely permit the reader to judge for himself of the reliability of the method of this investigation and the consistency and frankness of the responses, while at the same time they acquaint him with some of the more prevalent problem patterns found among the average adolescents who constituted the subjects of this study.

These few brief case studies should prove an aid to the reader in his interpretation of the chapters which follow in which we shall proceed to analyze the total data which we gathered by means of our problemmaire. As the above papers indicate, the boy's relations in his home seem to be the most important factor influencing his adjustments to life; hence we shall begin our analysis in the next chapter by considering the problems which the boy meets within his home environment.

II

PROBLEMS OF THE BOY IN THE HOME

Chapter 3

HOME BACKGROUND OF THE ADOLESCENT

Of all the formative agencies exerting an influence on the growing boy, that of the home is the strongest and most important. The findings of Hartshorne and May, in their *Studies in the Nature of Character,* show that the home has more moral influence upon children than school, church, or any other institution.[1] Years of interested care and parental devotion have forged ties of affection within the boy's heart which render him pliable and docile to the forces which may be exercised upon him in this controlled environment. No other institution enjoys this prime advantage, nor can any other institution compel him to enter so intimately into the life of the group as a whole as can the home.

But because of this intimacy of contact, and because of the prime position held by the home as an educative agency, it is important to know the boy's reaction to his home, not only to become better acquainted with the problems which he experiences within his familial environment, but also to be able to interpret better his difficulties in other fields. Where the roots of his very being are so firmly attached, the roots of his problems in other fields are likewise to be found. After studying the influence of home environment, Dimock concludes that "the basic and conspicuous difference in home background between the well- and poorly adjusted boys is seen to be unquestionably established."[2]

In investigating the adolescent's home environment, we formulated our questions so as to obtain a general picture of the cohesiveness of the familial bonds within the home and of such other factors as are likely to have a major effect upon the boy's life both within and without his home. Hence we likewise sought information on the financial conditions in the home, the health of those in the family, and the general religious atmosphere pervading the family life.

Cohesiveness of the Home

One of our first questions was designed to enable us to discover the extent to which our adolescents come from broken homes. By

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[1] H. Hartshorne and M. May, *Studies in Organization of Character* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1930), 98.

[2] H. S. Dimock, *Rediscovering the Adolescent* (New York: The Association Press, 1937), 73.

broken homes we mean homes in which either or both of the parents are dead, separated, or divorced. In so far as our results represent a cross section of our total Catholic secondary-school population, we note that the homes from which we draw our students in general have a higher than average percentage of integrity, for only 17.1 per cent of our boys come from broken homes, whereas the national average approaches 30 per cent. This can be explained first by the fact that the divorce-separation rate is much lower among Catholics; and, second, a broken home is often less able to meet the added financial burdens of Catholic secondary-school education; hence relatively few children from broken homes came within the scope of our study. Of this 17.1 per cent of broken homes, 14.1 per cent is accounted for by one or both of the parents being dead while 3.1 per cent is due to parents being separated or divorced, a percentage much less than half of the national average and even less than what would be expected of the average of Catholic families living in cities. An added 4.4 per cent of the boys failed to indicate whether their parents were separated or divorced, leaving a rather high percentage of unbroken homes where the parents are living together, namely, 78.4 per cent. The Maryland Study, however, found that only 70 per cent of the white population which their study covered came from unbroken homes.[3] Although it is unfortunate that almost one out of every five of the boys in our schools has the disadvantage of a broken home, yet we find that a very small number, less than 1 per cent, are deprived of both father and mother.

Limitation of Mother's Influence

To get an insight into the extent to which the mother's influence is hampered and divided because of economic pressure forcing her to seek employment outside the family, we asked the question, *Is your mother gainfully employed outside the home?* Almost one sixth replied that at least occasionally their mothers sought work outside the home for financial recompense. But more than one out of every ten (11.3 per cent) affirmed that his mother had a regular job which took her away from the home daily; less than one out of twenty (4.5 per cent) indicated that she worked away from home only occasionally, or only on certain days of the week.

In many cases it was found that the mothers who worked outside the home were widows. Some of the boys feel very keenly the absence of their mothers during a large part of the day and add that "the government ought to do something about taking care of widows," and that "there is no home life when mother has to be away all day working, coming home all tired out at night."

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[3] Howard M. Bell, *Youth Tell Their Story* (Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education, 1939), 20.

Size of Family

A central bond in home life is the number of children in the family. We find that in the homes from which our students come there are 3.82 children per family, which is somewhat higher than the figure which vital statisticians deem necessary for the maintenance of the status quo of population. Our percentage is higher than the national average[4] and perhaps a bit higher than that of the average Catholic family in the city. This high percentage of children per family is explained by the fact that every family in our study had at least one child — the student answering the problemmaire — and, furthermore, the families here represented had been married at least fourteen years. Yet, this is perhaps lower than the national average of all Catholic families because our average does not include children from rural and village families. It is an established fact at present that the number of children per family increases as the density of the population decreases.

It is interesting to note that only one out of every ten (10.6 per cent) of the boys of our study is an "only child." This is about half of the national average of single-child marriages.[5] We point out this figure, for the "only child" is often said to have more problems than the average boy who grows up amidst the give-and-take of brothers and sisters. While our figures indicate that an "only child" may have certain opportunities, comforts, and fewer financial worries, he may experience more difficulties in making social adjustments largely because of his having developed a more individualistic personality than the average boy of his age.

"Invaded" Homes

The cohesiveness of the home is often limited by persons outside the immediate family, such as boarders, or relatives, living in the home. Hence we asked the boys to indicate the number of individuals beside the members of their immediate family living with them. Our results show that more than one fourth (29.5 per cent) of the families have such an "outsider" living in the home, averaging 1.7 persons per "invaded" family. These persons outside the immediate family were in most cases relatives, either a grandparent, aunt or uncle, or both, although in some homes a boarder or two helped to swell the family circle. Our figure here is above the national average.[6] This

[4] *Fifteenth Census of the United States, Population, Vol. VI, Families* (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1930), 7. Dr. Gerald J. Schnepp, S.M. (*Leakage From a Catholic Parish,* Kirkwood, Mo.: Maryhurst Normal, 1942, 50), in a study of 1,115 Catholic urban families, found the average number of persons per family to be 3.53.

[5] *Fifteenth Census of the United States, Population Bulletin, Families, U. S. Summary* (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1933), 21.

[6] *Ibid.,* 24–26.

fact seems to indicate that the majority of our Catholic boys come from families located on the lower half of the financial scale. Ogburn[7] points out that 33 relatives are found in the average 100 homes, but our findings place this figure in the neighborhood of 40.

The effect of "outsiders" on the boy's problems is easily recognized, for relatives or lodgers in the home are always a complicating factor. The adolescent finds it difficult enough to adjust himself to two parents who are distinct personalities without having the opinions and interests of other adults to weigh in each situation.[8]

But discounting this rather large percentage of "invaded" homes, the number of broken homes, and the number of homes disrupted to the extent that the mother's influence is withdrawn during a large part of the day, we still have a rather high percentage of homes which are above the average in general cohesiveness. We must keep in mind, therefore, that we are getting just a bit of the cream of the adolescent crop in our Catholic high schools and therefore in interpreting all our data we are looking at the adolescent through slightly rose-tinted glasses.

Financial Conditions in the Home

Closely allied to the factors of cohesiveness in the home mentioned above are the financial conditions of the family. The entire character of the home, its cultural level, as well as the boy's social, recreational, and educational opportunities, are largely determined by the economic status of the family. Because of the intimate relation between money at the parents' disposal and the granting or the deprivation of many of the adolescent's wishes, we attempted to discover the general economic conditions in the home by asking the question, *Do financial troubles frequently create difficulties in your home?* To this, 42.1 per cent replied in the affirmative, 51 per cent in the negative, and 6.5 per cent stated that they were uncertain. The remaining .4 per cent failed to answer. In some instances this problem seems to be quite troublesome, as, for example, in the case of the freshman who states, "I wish we had enough money in our home so all of us could live together." The above figures fit in quite well with the general fact that very many of our Catholic students come from families in which the pennies have to be watched very closely. But since we are primarily interested in the problems of the adolescent we asked the boys to what extent they find themselves worrying about the financial condition of their family.

Here we note the boy's reaction to a problem which is intimately

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[7] *Recent Social Trends* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1933), 1, Chap. XIII, W. F. Ogburn, "The Family and Its Functions," 681–682.

[8] Ernest J. Chave, *Personality Development in Children* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937), 151.

connected with both his own and his family's well-being. As would be expected, our answers show that as the boy progresses through high school, he becomes more intimately concerned about the financial condition of his family. Yet we note that a number of boys leave this problem to their parents and do not let it affect them very much; especially is this true of freshmen, but least true is it of seniors. Of the 2000 boys, we find that almost one out of five (19.5 per cent) frequently worries about the financial condition of the family; 40.2 per cent worry about this only occasionally, 40 per cent only rarely, while a half dozen fail to give us any indication of their reaction.

Excessive Amount of Home Duties

Intimately related to the financial status of the home and the problems that this creates for the growing boy is the problem of the boy's being overloaded with work in the home. Hence we asked him, *Are you overloaded with duties in or about your home?* Naturally, this question excluded the ordinary work around the house. Our purpose was to sound out to what extent the average boy in our high schools feels he is imposed on in the home by an overbearing father or mother who is making him do more than he can ordinarily accomplish. Only 6.6 per cent indicated that they thought they were thus overloaded, while another 1.4 per cent were not sure whether they were or not. But the large majority of them, 92.8 per cent, stated definitely that they were not overloaded with duties about the home. Four boys failed to respond. Thus, only a small percentage claim overwork in the home as one of their problems; but those who do, regard it as one of the reasons why they are not happy at home. Some merely add, "If you have to go out to earn money and help out at home and do your homework for school besides, that's a real problem."

Health in the Home

An important element in home environment is the tone of family health as well as the nervous stability of the family members, especially of the parents. For that reason, the adolescent was asked whether his family was frequently troubled with illness. He was given to understand that minor ailments, such as colds or headaches, were not included under this heading. A surprisingly large number, 23 per cent, stated that their family was thus frequently troubled. This figure appears to be a bit higher than average by way of comparison with figures published in Public Health Reports[9] relative to the incidence of illnesses in the general population.

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[9] Selwyn D. Collins, *A General View of the Causes of Illness and Death at Specific Ages*, Reprint No. 1673 of Public Health Reports, Vol. 50, No. 8 (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1935), 12.

The Problem of Nervous Instability

Just as important, and perhaps even more so for the sensitive adolescent, is the general nervous stability of his parents. The number who stated that their father was nervous was 17.8 per cent as compared with more than twice that number, 38.3 per cent, who said the same of their mother. This ratio is in perfect agreement with Public Health findings on this point.[10]

When an individual feels insecure and cannot quite understand why it is that he is constantly shifting from one mood to another, admiring one thing one day and admiring quite its opposite the next, he needs someone who can exert a stabilizing influence on his life. But a parent who displays nervous instability tends to create a similar condition in the adolescent, who is naturally more or less unsettled. Still there is reason to be optimistic, for 70.4 per cent stated that their father was not the nervous type, while 53.1 per cent stated the same of their mother.

Since the nervous status of the parents acts both directly and indirectly on the boy's own emotional status, we asked him whether or not he regarded himself as inclined to be nervous. The answers place the adolescents in somewhat of a middle position between the nervous stability averages of the fathers and of the mothers. We find that about one in four or 24.1 per cent of the boys regard themselves as inclined to be nervous. More than seven out of ten (70.7 per cent) state the opposite. It is well to keep in mind, however, that our figures do not refer to an objective concept of nervousness, but to what the adolescent himself subjectively understands by the term.

Many adolescents become somewhat alarmed after someone has called their attention to their tendency to be nervous. Some imprudent individuals will tell the adolescent that he is of the nervous type just because his hand quivers slightly when it is held out. They do only harm and make the adolescent overconscious of a temporary condition which will pass off in a few years after he gains better control over himself.

A study of age trends in the above replies reveals that the older boys are inclined to regard their parents as nervous and to consider themselves as nervously inclined more frequently than the younger boys. There is likewise a steady increase with age in the number who say they worry easily. This may be due to the increased tensions which the older adolescent experiences both because of changes within and more complicated adjustments from without. Apparently this tendency continues in the same direction even after the final year in

[10] *Ibid.*, 12.

high school, for Friedel[11] found that a still higher percentage, nearly one third of the college boys in his study, regarded themselves as inclined to be nervous.

In view of the fact that the health of an individual, especially his nervous health, may profoundly affect his character as well as his dealings with others, and considering, too, the relatively large number of adolescents in our study who consider themselves rather nervous (24 per cent) and inclined to worry easily (41 per cent), it would seem that a program of mental hygiene in the high school might prove quite beneficial to those whose problems tend to upset their mental condition. Of course, there is some truth in the argument that the Catholic boy has the advantage of the confessional but, as we point out in a later chapter,[12] this is not adequately taking care of the problem. Too many are either rushed, bashful, or simply do not take the time. A brief, yet adequate explanation of the common principles of mental hygiene in the religion course would go far toward alleviating the mental difficulties of many an adolescent.

The Religious Atmosphere in the Home

One of the most important elements in the background of the student is the religious atmosphere of the home. Perhaps more than anything else, the general religious spirit that pervades the home influences the adolescent's outlook and dispositions toward almost everything with which he comes into contact. Especially is this fact true regarding those problems of his which have a moral angle. To sound out the religious tone of the home we put several questions regarding the religion of the parents, the extent to which the adolescent experiences religious difficulties because of a difference of religious views within the home, and the extent to which prayers are said regularly in the home. Then, to get the adolescent's summary impression of the place of religion in his home, we asked him whether or not he thought religion was an important factor in the life of his family. To this summary question, 1723, or 86.2 per cent, affirmed that they thought religion was an important factor in their home. However, 9.2 per cent did not think so, while 4.3 per cent were uncertain, leaving a mere half dozen who failed to answer.

A basic contributing factor to the religious atmosphere of the home is the religion of the parents. Therefore, we inquired about the extent to which the boy's parents differ from him in religion. According to the replies, mixed marriages exist in 10.1 per cent of the homes; i.e., one out of every ten boys differs from either one or

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[11] Francis J. Friedel, S.M., *The Home Adjustments of a Selected Group of College Men* (Washington, D. C.: Unpublished Master's Thesis, The Catholic University of America, 1935), 88.

[12] Cf. *infra*, 157–158.

both of his parents in religion. Over three times as many fathers as mothers differ from their son in religious status: 7.9 per cent of the fathers as against 2.5 per cent of the mothers, the overlapping .3 per cent accounting for the half dozen families in which both parents are non-Catholics. Analyzing the religious status of these 158 non-Catholic fathers, we find that 76 of them were classified by their sons as pagans, 33 simply as Protestants, a few over a dozen stated they did not know what religion, if any, their father had, while the remainder were distributed among the different sects. Analyzing the religion of the non-Catholic mothers, we note a similar distribution with the majority classified as pagans or Protestants.

With 10 per cent of our students coming from homes where they have the daily bad example of mixed marriages, and with the father or mother pagan in almost half of these cases, it would seem all the more necessary that we try to make up for this lack of good example by presenting concrete ideals to these boys in the religion class. Further, it seems that the adolescents want a healthy Catholic social environment where they will have the opportunity to meet Catholic companions.

Family Squabbles Over Religion

We were anxious to know to what extent this difference in religious beliefs was a source of anxiety or irritation to the boy. We should expect that it would cause difficulties, at least in some instances, since religion strikes at the root of fundamental viewpoints in an individual's life. In order to see how the adolescent reacted to differences of religious beliefs in the home we asked him, *Has a difference in the religious beliefs of your parents ever caused you any difficulties?* Here we received more gratifying answers than we expected. The surprisingly large number of 88.4 per cent answered in the negative, while only 4.7 per cent answered in the affirmative. But of this 4.7 per cent, 1.6 per cent emphasized the fact by stating that this difference in the religious beliefs of their parents *frequently* caused them difficulties. Those replying in this manner come largely from the upper classes in high school.

It must be added here that an unusually large number (6.9 per cent) failed to answer this question. Most of those who failed to answer interpreted the question as applying only to those whose fathers or mothers were non-Catholic. They failed to realize that though both parents may be Catholic, yet a difference of viewpoint on things religious could work difficulty for themselves. In this light we might be justified in adding this total to the number who have not experienced such difficulties; yet, we cannot be sure that some did not purposely refrain from answering so as not to incriminate their parents in any way. As will be noted in a number of other questions treating the boy's reactions to his parents, the adolescent

manifests a very strong filial loyalty. He shies away from exaggeration of his parents' faults and tends to minimize their shortcomings, with this exception, however: he does not approve of his parents' failure to understand or sympathize with his teen-age difficulties.

But to press the issue further so as to see how serious these difficulties are, we asked the question: *Have you ever had fights with your parents on matters of religion?* Only 1.1 per cent answered "Yes, frequently," while 7.3 per cent replied, "Occasionally." This question was one of several "check" questions which we inserted throughout the problemmaire to test the reliability and validity of the answers that we were receiving. To this question 89.4 per cent answered in the negative, a difference of only 1 per cent from the number who answered negatively to the parallel question immediately above. Checking the responses to these two questions, individual reply for individual reply, we note practically perfect correlation. If the answers we were receiving were not reliable, we should hardly receive answers from 2000 boys to a parallel question differing by such a small amount.

Extent of Regular Family Prayer

So far, our questions have sounded out the difficulties arising from defects in the religious atmosphere of the home. Our final question on this point endeavored to tap the positive side of the religious influence in the home. A fair barometer of the extent to which religion is regarded as of fundamental importance in the home is the regularity with which prayers are said in the home. Hence we put the question, *Are some prayers said regularly in your home?* The boys were given to understand that reference was being made not to private prayers said by individual members separately but to prayers said by the family together. In recent years writers and preachers have been loud in their condemnation of the absence of the laudatory practice of common prayer among the members of the family. The answers we received to our question would seem to furnish them with even more ammunition in decrying the lack of family prayer. The total number of families in which prayers are regularly said only slightly outbalances the number of families in which this laudable practice is not carried out: 48.1 per cent as against 47.6 per cent, leaving 4.3 per cent who were doubtful as to how to answer. These data compare favorably with the findings of the *Notre Dame Survey*[13] in which the practice of family prayer was found among 45 per cent of the Notre Dame families.

An interesting observation comes to light when we compare the number (48.1 per cent) who say that family prayer is a regular

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[13] *Bulletin of the University of Notre Dame, Survey of 15 Religious Surveys,* 1921–1936 (Notre Dame: The University Press, 1939), XXXIV, 125.

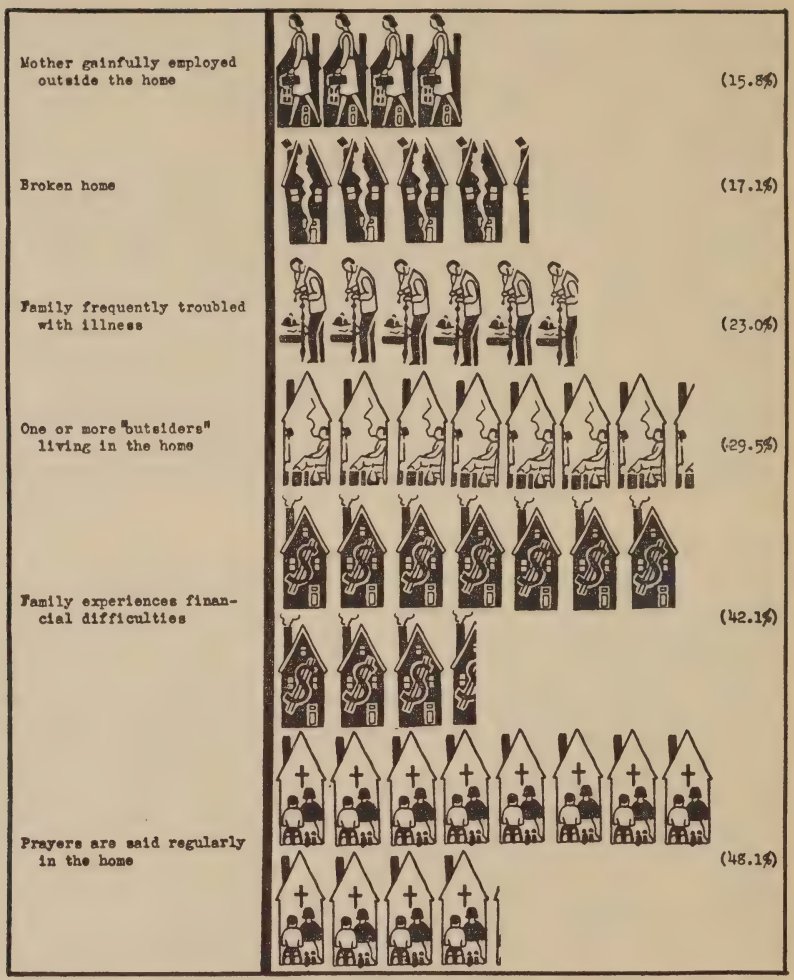

Figure 1. Conditions in the homes from which our adolescents come. Each symbol represents the respective conditions in the homes of 4 per cent of our Catholic high-school population.

practice in their home and the number (86.2 per cent) who stated previously that religion was an important factor in the life of their family. Does this difference of 34.1 per cent mean that nearly one third of the boys, in appraising religion in their family, fail to regard family prayer as an essential factor in this appraisal of the religious status of their family? Or does it mean that they feel religion can be an important factor in family life without family prayer? We have

no way of learning from our data the reasons underlying this difference of viewpoint.

With our introductory questions concluded, we have a general picture of the home background from which come the cross section of the students furnishing the information for this study. Figure 1 summarizes graphically the main outlines of the data just reviewed.

Chapter 4

GENERAL REACTION TO HOME AND PARENTS

Attitude of the Boy Toward His Home

We come now to the second part of our study of the boy in the home: his reaction or general attitude toward the total home situation. To get his general disposition toward his home, we first put the general question, *Are you usually happy when at home?* and then followed up with a few specific questions. To the query on the boy's

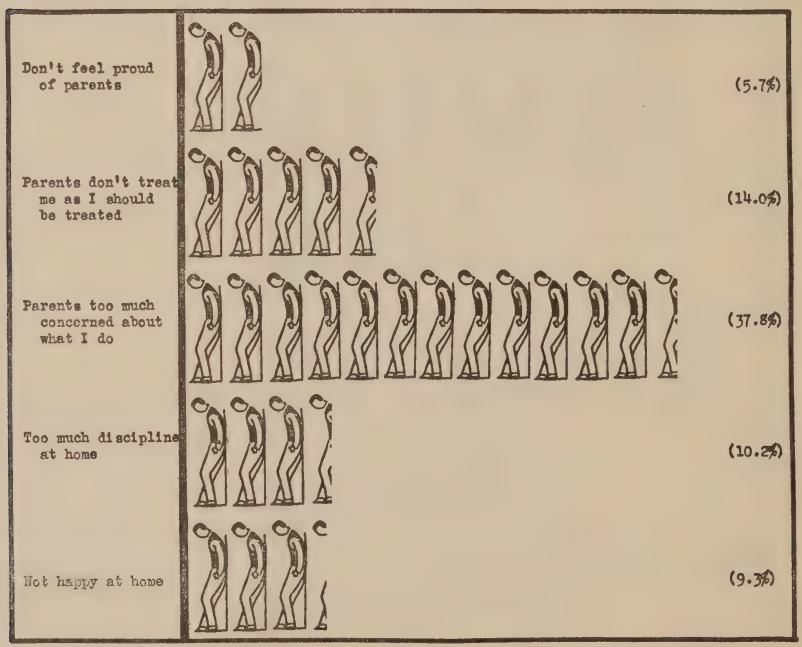

Figure 2. Adolescents dissatisfied at home. Each symbol represents 3 per cent of the adolescents on the high-school level.

happiness in his home, only one failed to answer while four were doubtful, all the others finding a decisive "Yes" or "No" sufficient to indicate their answer. The results are very refreshing, for 90.4 per cent of the boys stated that they were happy when at home. Only 9.3 per cent indicated that their home life is usually unhappy. (See

Fig. 2.) This is particularly encouraging since many of the recent studies of adolescents have given us the impression that the majority of young people were dissatisfied with their homes, leading dreary lives, finding within the confines of their homes little else but unhappiness. This pessimistic impression is due to the fact that many of these studies emphasized problem cases or dealt with abnormal individuals. Sister Mildred Knoebber, O.S.B., in making a study of 3000 high-school girls obtained results that agree very closely with ours. She found that 92 per cent of the girls declared their home life to be happy, only 7.5 per cent finding it contrariwise.[1]

Reasons for Unhappiness in the Home

We thought it interesting to learn from those who declared their home life unhappy what factors in the home environment they judged as responsible for this condition. To obtain this information, we asked them why they were usually unhappy when at home. The responses of these 9.3 per cent who were unhappy in the home were quite varied, but two thirds of all the reasons given by them are represented according to the following percentages:

My parents (or brothers and sisters) are always nagging at me	11.1
Am not allowed hardly any social liberties	10.2
Too many fights and arguments with my brothers and sisters	10.2
Nothing to do at home, nothing to interest me	8.4
Quarrels in the home, disagreement with father	8.3
Too much arguing and quarreling at home, especially between my father and mother	7.8
Too much arguing about financial troubles at home	6.1
Always being "yelled at" or "bawled out"	5.5

The other third of the reasons are variously distributed, but the following random selection of the reasons given are representative:

Because my father comes home drunk and hollers at everybody.

Too much work; not enough time to play.

Dad's grumpy and creates a disagreeable atmosphere at home.

My sisters get everything they want and I don't.

Because of quarrels, nothing to do, and the fact that they treat me like a baby.

Dad yells at me and hits me.

I have no one to associate with at home.

My father finds so much wrong with me and does so much arguing and preaching.

I'm simply ignored at home — my sisters show no interest in anything I do or say.

Dad is very crabby and does not try to understand me.

My parents think that I should not drive a car, look at a girl, or take a glass of beer (from a seventeen-year-old boy).

Partly my fault, but dad usually makes mountains out of mole hills.

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[1] *Self-Revelation of the Adolescent Girl* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1936), 52.

Because there are too damn many people ordering me around!
I'm not allowed to do what other boys are allowed to do.
There is no union in our home: too much quarreling and not enough real love.

Thus from those boys themselves who say they are not happy at home we gather the main underlying causes: quarrels and arguments in the home, whether between the boy and his parents, the boy and his brothers and sisters, or between the parents themselves or between other members of the family. Fully 50 per cent of the reasons for unhappiness can be attributed to the disagreeable atmosphere created by quarreling in the home.

From this we go to another question which we inserted with the purpose of checking the reliability of our data. The following parallels our previous inquiry into the extent to which the adolescent found his home life happy: *Are you satisfied with your home to the extent that you never think of running away from home?* The extent to which the answers to this check question tend to vary with the answers given to the companion question reveals practically perfect correlation. In the present question, 9.1 per cent answered in the negative, whereas an almost identical number, 9.3 per cent declared a negative response in the previous question, leaving an insignificant difference of two tenths of 1 per cent in the negative responses to two questions differently placed and intended to check the same data. Checking on the individual replies, we find that of the 186 boys who answered the previous question negatively, 178 answered the same way to the check question, thus giving an actual difference in identity of response of only four tenths of 1 per cent.

Reaction to Home Discipline

Coming somewhat closer to the boy's reaction to parental influence in the home, we asked him whether or not he thought there was too much discipline in his home. Consistent with the indications found in answers to previous questions, we find only 10.2 per cent declaring that they thought there was too much discipline in their home. But the large majority (86.3 per cent) gave a negative reply. This same ratio appears to change very little even during later adolescence, for Friedel[2] found that 90 per cent of the college boys involved in his study were satisfied with the discipline in their home. Of the remaining students, 1.9 per cent were uncertain as to what reply to give, while 1.6 per cent left the question unanswered.

We felt this question to be rather important in an investigation of boys' problems, for nothing is more deadening and disheartening to the adolescent's initiative and enthusiasm than an overbearing discipline. As will be noted later, the adolescent expects a reasonable

[2] *The Home Adjustments of a Selected Group of College Men*, 32.

amount of discipline in the home but he gives expression to an aloof reaction when he thinks the discipline is overexacting. He becomes hardened, develops an attitude of coldness toward the idea of consulting his parents, and even resents the very thought of going to them openly with his difficulties. A senior complains of extreme discipline in his home, saying, "Parents should have more faith in their children and grant them at least some liberty. I can't even go out of the house at night."

Leisure Time Spent at Home

Closely allied to the boy's views of his home and to his reactions to the discipline therein is the amount of leisure time which he elects to spend there. Hence, we placed the question, *How much of your leisure time do you spend at home?*

From an analysis of our findings on this point, as presented in the table below, we note that over 60 per cent of the adolescents of our study spend one half or more of their leisure time at home.[3] It is indeed a healthy sign when a large percentage of the boys spend their

TABLE 1. Amount of Leisure Time Which 2000 High-School Boys Spend at Home

Amount of leisure time spent at home	*Freshmen*	*Sophomores*	*Juniors*	*Seniors*	*All classes*
All of it	3.6%	4.8%	2.4%	2.2%	3.3%
Three fourths of it	22.6	22.8	23.2	21.8	22.6
One half of it	37.0	37.6	34.4	30.6	34.9
One fourth of it	25.8	23.6	27.6	29.0	26.5
Scarcely any	8.6	8.0	10.6	13.8	10.3
None	.8	.8	1.0	2.2	1.2
No answer	1.6	2.4	.8	.4	1.2

leisure where they are best protected from the harmful influences which are so often present in places where youth sometimes spend their free hours. It is noteworthy that only one tenth of the boys (11.5 per cent) state that they spend "scarcely any" or "none" of their leisure time at home. A freshman answering in this manner adds, "My father and mother growl from morning till night when I am home so I scram." This percentage is about 1 per cent higher than the usual 10 per cent who find their home life unsatisfactory. This slight discrepancy is accounted for by the fact that some twenty

[3] In a study of nearly 10,000 young people in New York, it was also found that the average young man spends about one half of his leisure time at home, which amounts to twenty-one hours per week if he is going to school and slightly more if not. N. P. McGill and E. N. Matthews, *Youth of New York City* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1940), 308.

boarding students were included in our study. They, of course, spend little time at home.

Upon further analysis of Table 1, we detect a trend of decreased leisure time spent at home as we progress from the underclassmen to the upperclassmen. This trend is graphically portrayed in Figure 3. While two thirds of the freshmen and sophomores spend one half or more of their leisure time at home, only slightly more than one

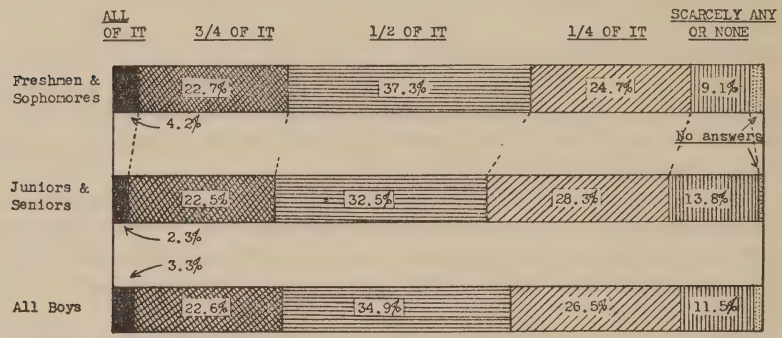

Figure 3. Amount of leisure time spent at home.

half of the seniors spend 50 per cent or more of their leisure time at home. This, of course, would be expected, since the social development of the older boy is further advanced and hence takes him more and more out of the home for many of his leisure-time activities. Our findings on this point are quite in accord with those of Dimock,[4] who found the sixteen-year-old boy to spend four and one half hours less per week in the home than the twelve-year-old boy.

General Reaction of the Adolescent to His Parents

We come still closer to the boy's face-to-face reactions to his parents in the question, *Do you feel so proud of your parents that you like to have your friends see and meet them?* This question was intended to sound out the adolescent's general attitude toward his parents. To this inquiry 87.5 per cent of the boys responded affirmatively, 6.4 per cent negatively, 5.7 per cent indicated doubt, and .4 per cent left the question blank. These responses are in keeping with the general healthy attitude manifested by the boy toward his familial environment. It is evident, however, that if the boy does not feel proud of his parents, any influence they try to exert on him will leave him cold and resistive. He is simply set against their viewpoints, harboring in his own mind the conviction that they are out of date, not up to modern times. Out of obedience he may listen to what they have to say, but their admonitions will have no effect on him.

[4] *Rediscovering the Adolescent*, 31.

Few situations in the adolescent's life are more regrettable than that in which he feels himself ashamed of his own parents. Despite many deprivations of privilege and difference of viewpoint, the average adolescent will entertain loyal sentiments of esteem toward his parents. However, if the boy's parents manifest an apparently unsympathetic attitude toward him, if they continually embarrass him in front of his friends, if day after day the youth becomes more and more convinced that they do not understand him, he gradually loses pride in his parents, especially his father, till finally his feelings of pride give way to feelings bordering on shame. This is one of the most poignant problems that certain adolescents have to face. It is a problem that can be solved effectively only by the parents themselves. They must adopt a more understanding and less severe attitude toward their son. Fortunately, however, according to our study, only one out of sixteen is faced with such a dilemma. The majority harbor the sentiments of the freshman who added, "Yes, I am proud of them. I think they are very intelligent, and generous in everything they do. They have taught me the value of an education and I will never let them down."

We thought that perhaps a factor in the above was the foreign birth of either or both of the boy's parents, so we inquired into this point and found that 23.6 per cent of the fathers as compared with 21.3 per cent of the mothers were born outside the United States. In nine tenths of these cases, if one parent was foreign born, the other was also. A small number, fourteen, were not sure of their parents' nationality. One might suspect that foreign-born parentage would carry with it attitudes and ideas not in harmony with American ideals, and hence constitute a contributing factor toward calling forth a lack of esteem on the part of the son; for as Chave points out, parental dispositions are not separate from cultural habits.[5] But a study of our findings fails to bear out this point. There is only a very slight tendency for boys of foreign-born parents to feel less proud of them than do boys of native parents.

The Adolescent Wants to Be Treated as a Man

To search out further the general attitude of the boy toward his parents, and thus reveal the extent to which he regards the attitude of his parents toward him as a source of some of his problems, we put the question, *Do you feel your parents treat you as a young man your age should be treated?* The importance with which this matter is regarded by adolescents is indicated by the fact that only three boys left this question unanswered. Further evidence of its importance in the mind of the boy is the decisiveness of the responses, for only 1.4 per cent indicated a doubtful answer. Roughly speaking,

[5] *Personality Development in Children*, 158.

three fourths of the boys (74 per cent) feel that their parents treat them as they should be treated, while only one out of seven (14 per cent) says the opposite. An additional 10.4 per cent qualify their response by "sometimes."

This question comes close to the heart of many of the adolescent's difficulties with his parents. His recently developed physical, emotional, and mental powers have brought with them a host of new feelings, not the least of which is a feeling of growing independence and a concomitant desire for a loosening of the parental bonds. These sentiments are expressed in an increasing demand for the treatment accorded an adult. It is the wise parent who gradually loosens the parental hold on his maturing son, for he or she thus removes a host of delicate problems which otherwise crop up. By gradually granting more freedom in accordance with their son's needs, the parents keep and even increase his esteem of them and confidence in them and thereby provide a harbor of safe retreat to which the boy can turn when the storm of seething passion sweeps over him.

If the boy is dissatisfied with parental treatment, perhaps his father and mother are too strict with him in the home. To get some indication of this point we asked the boys to check whether they regarded their parents' attitude toward them as "strict," "lenient," or "medium." In response to this, less than one out of ten (8.9 per cent) indicates that he regards his parents as consistently strict. More than double this number (21.4 per cent) regard their parents as lenient, while a small percentage of 1.2 failed to respond. The large majority, 68.5 per cent, however, look upon their parents as "medium," i.e., not too lenient and not too strict, or sometimes strict and sometimes lenient. Others say their father is too strict but their mother is just right, or vice versa.

The adolescent strongly resents not being clearly understood. This fact is evidenced by the notes of explanation which the boys added to their answers to the question under consideration and to many other questions. The boys seemed to be almost overanxious to record their opinions regarding the disciplinary standards maintained by their parents. Most of their statements were to the effect that their parents "switched from being strict one time to being more lenient the next," or "medium, but just the way they should be," or "not too strict but strict enough."

When we compare the number of boys who feel their parents are strict with those who say their parents do not treat them as a young man their age should be treated, we note very little correlation. As a matter of fact, some go so far as to state that they are not satisfied with the way their parents are treating them because their parents are too easy. As one of the boys added, "They let me do whatever I want and don't guide me the way they should."

"Parents Too Careful About What I Do"

Because it has often been repeated in recent literature on youth that young people feel their parents meddle too much in their affairs, we thought it of interest to see to what extent this attitude is prevalent among our Catholic adolescents. Therefore, we asked the question, *Do you think your parents are too much concerned and too careful about you and what you do?* Answers to this question reflect the extent to which parents are hindering or fostering the growing consciousness of the "self" in the adolescent. A consciousness of being a "person" in one's own individual right is accompanied by a feeling of independence in thought, word, and action. Hence, any interference with this rather comprehensive development in the adolescent on the part of the parent is going to be met with disapproval. The extent to which this maturation process is interfered with is the extent to which this becomes one of the adolescent's problems. And because the adolescent is very sensitive to any interference with what he feels to be his natural rights, we can expect that the number answering "Yes" to this question represents, if anything, an excessive, rather than an insufficient amount of parental concern over the adolescent's affairs. Summarizing the responses to this question, we find that over one third of the boys (37.8 per cent) feel that their parents are too careful about them and too much concerned about what they do. It must be remembered, however, that this is not an objective statement of the situation. It is purely subjective, indicating how the boy himself feels about this matter, which, after all, shows us to what extent the adolescent finds this to be one of his problems. However, there is reason to be optimistic because 58.2 per cent found no cause to complain about their parents' being oversolicitous about them.

Chapter 5

CONFLICTS IN THE PARENT-SON RELATIONSHIP

Problems Arising From Parental Attitude

We will now consider those problems of the boy in the home which are more particular and specific. The problems discussed in earlier pages of this section were the result of general situations in the home or general parental attitudes. But we now come to grips with the problems arising from the face-to-face relations of the boy with his father and mother. In treating these problems, we shall consider first the boy's difficulties which grow out of his relations with his father and then compare these with similar difficulties which arise from his relations with his mother.

Of all the influences that move the heart of the adolescent toward loving compliance or stubborn resistance, none bear as much weight as the attitude which parents take toward their son. There is nothing to which the boy's reaction is keener and more sensitive than the attitude which his father and mother manifest in their dealings with him.

The Boy's View of His Parents' Attitude

Thirty per cent of the boys accuse their fathers of being "cold and indifferent" toward them, at least at times. Only one third as many, however, say the same of their mothers. (See Fig. 4, p. 81.) This tendency for the mother to adopt a more sympathetic attitude toward the boy is due to the fact that 1701 of the mothers (85.2 per cent) as compared with 1237 of the fathers (61.9 per cent) are declared by their sons to be "friendly and interested."

With 30 per cent of the boys stating that their father is at times cold or indifferent toward them, there is still much to be desired in the father-son relationship for the boy expects his father to be a friend, a "pal" to him at all times, not merely now and then. This changeable attitude on the part of the father tends at times to develop strange thoughts and tense emotions in the adolescent. The boy's natural instability and oversensitiveness in his relations with others prime him to place hasty interpretations on actions which indicate a lack of affection. In noticing or thinking that he notices a lack of sympathy on the part of his father, he may be led to question whether his putative parent is actually his father, with the result that strange conduct may ensue. For this reason, a frank and sympathetic attitude

is so important; it unquestionably lies at the root of many of the teen-age boy's problems. For this reason, too, "certain feelings, relationships, and attitudes of the parents toward the child are being increasingly emphasized in clinical work as factors in maladjustment."[1]

Boys who do not feel that their father is friendly or interested in them are quite deeply pained by the fact. Some frankly state that they are puzzled over their father's attitude. Others add:

> I would like to know how to become more friendly with my father. He is very nice to me but does not seem to understand me.
>
> I believe our parents should "get together" more with us so they could understand us, and they should forget some of their old-fashioned ideas.
>
> In my estimation most fathers, at least in my case, do not give enough time and do not get interested in their sons. For this reason many a boy gets off on the wrong track.
>
> How can one make his father make different agreements with him, that is, make him be more friendly and act like a chum with him?
>
> I'd like my father to act more friendly toward me. I really need his help in many ways. I think it is wrong for fathers to be indifferent in any way or at any time to their sons.

In these remarks as well as in our findings above we note a tendency for the boy to regard his father's attitude toward him as being somewhat less sympathetic than that of his mother. Is this because the boy fears his father rather than loves him? It is this very question that we put to him, explaining parenthetically that he might obey his father because he had to, and hence not out of love for him.

Parental Fear Versus Parental Love

If our information is reliable, and we seem to have evidence that it is, a rather unhappy situation exists in the father-son relationship of 11.1 per cent of the homes of our adolescent boys. (See Fig. 4.) According to our data, one out of every ten Catholic high-school boys fears his father rather than loves him. Now, a reverential fear on the part of the son will certainly enhance the influence the father can exert on his son; but when the fear is such that love is stifled, the carry-over value of the father's immediate jurisdiction can be little more than nil. Paternal love draws the son to his father and causes him to reveal his difficulties and ask his father's advice; but an obedience which brings compliance because of a fear of consequences drives the adolescent deeper into his own self, causing him to close up his difficulties within himself. This reaction is sometimes externalized in a peculiar form of conduct whereby the adolescent appears sullen, preoccupied, worried, or uninterested in the things at hand. When the boy displays such behavior, he needs sympathetic under-

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[1] H. W. Potter, "Family Situations in Relation to the Emotionally Unstable Child," in *The Scientist Looks at the Emotionally Unstable Child,* Child Research Clinic Series, Vol. I, No. 4, Part II (Langhorne, Pa.: Child Research Clinic, 1935), 5–13.

standing and guidance most of all. If he manifests this type of introversion rather frequently, it is well for the parent, and particularly the father, to take stock of his own attitude toward his son. Perhaps, unknowingly, he is the cause of this introversive reaction.

The sun appears, however, behind this dark cloud in the heartening answers of 1500 lads (75 per cent) who state that they love their father rather than fear him. Of the remaining 14 per cent of the boys, 5.7 per cent could not make up their minds as to whether fear or love predominated in their attitude toward him, while the rest, with the exception of nine who did not answer, found the question impossible to answer because of individual circumstances.

Extent to Which Parents Are Considered Old-fashioned

Another sensitive point in the father-son and mother-son relation is the adolescent's dislike of being associated with anything or anyone who is regarded as out of date. Recent writings have given us the impression that it is rather common for the young people of today to regard their parents as old fashioned. In order to test the validity of this impression, as well as to see how prevalent this attitude is among the adolescents in Catholic high schools, we devised the following three questions: *Do you think your father is old fashioned in some of his ideas? Do you think your mother is old fashioned in some of her ideas? Do you think your mother is old fashioned in dress?*

More than four out of ten (42.8 per cent) indicated that they thought their father was old fashioned in some of his ideas. Exactly the same number said this of their mother, though it does not necessarily follow that the same boys answered both questions identically. However, 28.8 per cent did say that both their father and their mother were old fashioned in some of their ideas. (See Fig. 4, p. 81.) In other words, two thirds (67.3 per cent) of those who feel their father has old fashioned ideas feel the same way about their mother, and vice versa.

It would seem, therefore, that a real problem is likely to exist in at least two out of every three cases where parents are regarded as being out of date in some of their ideas. In the other third of the cases, it appears that a serious problem is likely to arise, since in these cases only one of the parents is regarded as having old-fashioned ideas. Those adolescents who are likely to have a problem in this matter represent, however, only three out of ten in the general high-school population.

Foreign-Born Parentage and the Accusation, "Out-of-date"

Does foreign-born parentage figure as a factor in this problem? An analysis of our data reveals that it does, but not to an exceptionally great extent. Where fewer than four out of ten of the boys of native-born parents regard their parents' ideas as old fashioned, more than five out of ten of foreign-born parents mention the same.

We likewise note that among boys of foreign-born parents, the percentage who claim that their mother harbors old-fashioned ideas is slightly larger than the percentage who say the same of their father.

An age trend is also present in our findings. There is a slight but consistent tendency for the number who feel their parents are out of date in some of their ideas to rise as the boy progresses through high school. Thus, the 38 per cent among the freshmen who are of this opinion climbs to 46 per cent among the seniors.

The fact that 43 per cent of the parents are considered as having old-fashioned ideas is not so surprising when we recall, first, that our question contained the limiting phrase, "old fashioned in *some* of their ideas," and, second, that manners and customs of modern society have changed considerably since the time when the boy's father and mother were adolescents. Indeed, there would rather be cause for wonder if a fair number of parents were not regarded as differing considerably in some of their ideas from those termed "modern" today.

It must not be disturbing to parents to have their sons consider their ideas as old fashioned, for to a certain extent this attitude on the part of the adolescent is an outcropping of the tendency toward denial of authority which is quite characteristic of adolescence. Underlying this readiness to reject the views held by an older generation is the adolescent's growing consciousness of being a person in his own right. He therefore feels that he has a right to believe and do as he pleases without the domination of others; he wants to approve of everything himself before he accepts it. His expanded mental powers are quite naturally the prime factor in evidence here. But there is another factor underlying this tendency to look askance at parental ideas; namely, the boy's expanding social environment which brings him into contact with ideas and standards of conduct differing from those of his parents, and because they may be more liberal, they appear to him to be more modern.

Not all the fault lies with the boy by any means. In many instances the parents are to blame, for they have failed to adapt themselves to changing conditions. We shall touch on this point more definitely a little later in the chapter when we discuss the reasons which the adolescent gives for being misunderstood by his parents. But, as H. C. Schumacher points out, "within reason, parents should learn to accommodate themselves to the changing times."[2] If they are to hold the respect and confidence of their sons, they must realize that "they will have to modify certain externals to conform to modern demands and to the age and sex of the adolescent."[3] Persisting in the manners and viewpoints of a former age will serve only to erect barriers between themselves and their children.

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[2] *The Adolescent* (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic Conference on Family Life, 1937), 74.

[3] *Ibid.*, 74.

Our figures also showed that only 2.1 per cent of the boys consider their mother as old fashioned in dress. A still smaller number, 1.7 per cent, were doubtful if their mother was to be placed in this same category. But the rest of the boys found their mother modern enough in dress to escape being judged old fashioned.

Summarizing our findings on this point, we may say that, in general, the problem of considering father and mother as old fashioned in their ideas is not nearly as prevalent among the boys in our Catholic high schools as it would appear to be among youth in general. And as for the mother's manner of dress being a thorn in the side of the up-to-date, "modern-loving" adolescent, such is a fact in only an insignificant number of cases.

Unreasonable Parental Demands

Somewhat allied to the idea that parents are old fashioned is the thought that parents are unreasonable in their demands. It is quite evident that conflict reigns and obedience is rendered difficult wherever the boy believes that the demands which are placed on him are beyond reason. To obtain some measure of the extent to which this attitude exists, we asked the two questions: *Do you think your father is sometimes unreasonable in his commands?* and *Do you think your mother is sometimes unreasonable in her demands?*

According to the replies received to the first question, four out of every ten boys (39.3 per cent) feel that their father is unreasonable in his commands, at least at times, and a few (3.1 per cent) are doubtful. But half of the boys (49.5 per cent) do not experience this difficulty at all. The remaining percentage is accounted for by those who failed to respond and by those to whom the question did not apply because their father was dead. Judging from Friedel's findings,[4] it would seem that this problem is almost cut in half by the time the boys reach the college level, for only 21 per cent of his subjects regarded the parental demands to which they were subjected as unreasonable.

In reply to our second question, fully six out of ten state that their mother is never unreasonable in the demands she makes upon them, though nearly one third of the boys (32.6 per cent) state just the opposite. Comparing the responses received to these two questions, we note that the number of boys who feel that their father is unreasonable in his demands is 10 per cent greater than the number who feel the same way about their mother. A further study of these two questions reveals that more than one out of every five boys (21.8 per cent) feels that both his father and his mother are unreasonable in their demands. (See Fig. 4, p. 81.) In other words, two thirds (66.8 per cent) of those who say that their mother is overdemanding say the

[4] *The Home Adjustments of a Selected Group of College Men*, 105.

same about their father. There would seem to exist, therefore, at least at times, a rather acute problem in the lives of that one fifth of the general high-school population who feel that both of their parents go beyond reason in their demands.

We should like to point out again that our findings are not an objective measure of the extent to which parents make reasonable demands; they are not intended as such. Our figures merely show the boy's subjective reaction to current parental demands and thus indicate the extent to which he regards these demands as constituting a point of conflict in his relations with his parents. It is well to remember, however, that our findings on this point represent perhaps only the minimal extent of this problem rather than the maximal, for the adolescent boy is most loyal to his parents and tends to minimize, rather than exaggerate, any shortcoming or error on their part.

This same feeling of filial loyalty may, however, lie at the root of some of the adolescent's conflicts. As Clifford Beers pointed out in his well-known book, *The Mind That Found Itself,* there is many a battle that goes on within the mind itself, a kind of civil war which one hesitates to bring out into the open. Notwithstanding the similarity of environment that exists within the home, each individual has his own particular temperament. Regardless of affection, close contact over a long period is bound to reveal defects and inconsistencies which gripe and twinge the finer sensitivities and thus stir up conflicting attitudes and emotions with respect to other members of the family. Williamson and Darley[5] stress the fact that such conflicts may never be verbalized because the boy is afraid to assert his individuality for fear of offending his parents. Thus, they may never come to learn of his conflicts in this regard.

Selfish Impulses Versus Filial Loyalty

To obtain an indication of the extent to which the adolescent experiences internal conflict between selfish impulses and feelings of filial loyalty, we devised the following three questions: *Do you ever feel "mad" at your father while at the same time you feel you must be loyal to him? Do you ever feel "mad" at your mother while at the same time you feel you must be loyal to her? Do you ever feel "mad" at other members of the family while at the same time you feel you must be loyal to them?*

In the following table we have summarized the answers received to these questions.

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[5] E. G. Williamson and J. G. Darley, *Student Personnel Work* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1937), 219.

TABLE 2. Frequency With Which 2000 Adolescent Boys Experience Internal Conflicts Resulting From Relations With Members of the Family

Experience conflict between feelings of antagonism and loyalty toward:	*Frequently*	*Occasionally*	*Rarely*	*No answer, or question was inapplicable*
My father.....	25.9%	36.6%	29.3%	8.2%
My mother.....	20.0	33.2	42.6	4.2
Other members..	25.0	37.6	32.7	4.7

A glance over our findings reveals that over 60 per cent of the boys experience, at least occasionally, an internal clash between feelings of loyalty and antagonism toward their father. An equal number more or less frequently experience a similar conflict with other members of the family, principally brothers and sisters. But only slightly more than five out of ten experience this conflict of feelings with regard to their mother. It is worth noting that in all three cases most of these boys say that they experience this conflict only occasionally. Only one out of four states that he frequently experiences this conflict with regard to the father and other members in the home. Only one out of five states the same in respect to his mother.

In studying our data for age trends, we discover a tendency for more and more boys as they become older to experience more and more conflicts with their parents as a result of opposing feelings of antagonism and loyalty. But just the opposite trend is evinced in the matter of conflicting feelings with regard to other members of the family. In other words, antagonistic impulses are more frequently prompted by a domineering attitude on the part of older brothers and sisters than by younger members of the family. Sometimes, however, a younger member of the family may be the source of difficulty, as is evident in the following comments by a senior and a sophomore:

> I find a lot of trouble to get along with my little brother. He is always annoying me and when I correct him for doing wrong I have my father yelling at me. My brother thinks that just because he is in the fifth grade he can go with me and do the things I do. A lot of arguments arise. My father thinks I am doing evil if I do not want my brother to come with me. My father thinks I'm always doing something wrong and for this reason I don't like him. He is always crabby and "snaps my head off" when I ask him something.

> I have to work after school every night and the only night I have off I have to stay in and watch the baby when I want to go out. This boils my blood and gets the whole family on my neck.

Clash of Viewpoints Between Parents and Son

Having dealt with the adolescent's internal conflicts resulting from antagonistic feelings toward various members of the family, we come

to a consideration of problems caused by conflicting viewpoints between the boy and his parents. With the gap between the thought and behavior of the members of succeeding generations ever widening, it is not surprising that a clash of viewpoints between parents and son should occur. The problems resulting from opposing points of view may be due to an unwise effort on the part of parents to impose their own ideas and customs on their sons. The extent to which this situation exists is indicated by the boys' replies to a question on this very point.

According to answers received, 14.7 per cent of the boys state that their parents *frequently* try to impose their own ideas and customs on them. An additional 28.3 per cent say that they experience such imposition only *occasionally*. Note how these combined figures (43 per cent) compare with the 42.8 per cent who felt that their parents were old fashioned in some of their ideas. A study of individual replies to these two questions bears out the correlation, though there are discrepancies in individual cases. This ratio of four out of ten who have this problem is apparently reduced somewhat within the four years following high school, for Friedel[6] found that only 25 per cent of the older adolescents involved in his study complained of parental imposition in the matter of outmoded ideas and customs. But with over half of the boys (56.3 per cent) of our study finding no complaint at all to make in regard to parental insistence on old-fashioned ideas and customs, we still have good reason to be optimistic.

Despite the adolescent's views, all wise observers agree that parents should insist on the inculcation of certain unchanging moral standards, even if modern society labels them as old fashioned. But our findings indicate that the burden of the adolescent's complaint does not hinge basically on moral ideas and customs but rather, as we shall point out in a later chapter when we treat the adolescent's social problems, upon the deprivation of certain social privileges and liberties. This likewise explains why there is a tendency for more of the older rather than of the younger boys to complain of their parents' imposing outmoded ideas upon them. It would seem that in some instances parents have failed to take note of their son's maturation and of the consequent social needs to the satisfaction of which he has a right.

Times have changed and a changed civilization has created new social needs for the adolescent, thus necessitating on the part of parents a changed attitude from that which was in vogue when they were in their teens. Parents who do not recognize this fact merely alienate their sons and pave the way for distrust and a host of new problems. As Williamson and Darley point out, family maladjustments grow out of the well-intentioned but misdirected efforts of

[6] *Op. cit.*, 27.

parents to do things for their children according to one set of standards that may not be applicable at all at the present time.[7]

The modern age has brought with it a flood of temptations and opportunities for sin which were unknown a generation ago. These render it all the more necessary that parents be alert and ready to go out of their way, if need be, to maintain their son's confidence so that, trusting in their advice, he may come through the particularly dangerous period of adolescence unscathed. In some instances, this may mean "modernizing" their attitude toward his activities and becoming more sympathetic in their dealings with him. It may mean allowing him a few more social privileges; it may mean cooperating with him to the extent of planning social affairs with him and inviting him to bring his friends into the home.

To what extent is such cooperation current between parents and the high-school boy of today? Let us have the boys themselves give us the answer.

"Open House" and the Adolescent

To the question, *Do your parents encourage you to bring your friends to your home?* only 48 per cent answered with an unqualified "Yes." This means that over half of our boys do not always feel free to bring their friends to their home where they might get together for their social recreation. The situation, however, is not quite so discouraging, for an additional 31.1 per cent mention that they are encouraged in this matter, but only *occasionally*. It would seem, then, that nearly eight out of every ten (79.1 per cent) are encouraged to bring their friends to their home, at least once in a while. But the other two out of ten are apparently unwelcome to associate with their friends in the wholesome atmosphere of the home. The corner drugstore, the street, or automobile are their only choice when they want to meet their friends. With this in mind, we do not have to look far to find a cause of the occasional delinquents found among our high-school population. If the boys and their friends are not welcome at home, have we much reason to blame them for seeking their recreation on the street corner or in the neighborhood poolroom?

But in the case of the adolescent who has started to "date" girl friends, where the danger of associating away from home is all the greater, how prevalent is the practice for the girl friend's parents to invite the boy to spend the evening in her home? How close does current practice approach the ideal in this matter? Answers to the question, *Do your parents or the parents of your girl friend encourage your visiting her in the home?* show that less than three out of ten (27.1 per cent) enjoy this protective atmosphere. This ratio rises to more than four out of ten (41.1 per cent), however, when we eliminate

[7] *Student Personnel Work*, 220.

those who never go out with girls. But of the 1316 boys who do "date" girls at least occasionally, more than one third (33.8 per cent) say they are never invited to spend an evening with their girl friend in her home. As would be expected, quite a large number were uncertain, replying in a manner similar to the sophomore who says, "I cannot truthfully say because I have not been going with girls long enough to know."

A question that comes quite naturally to mind at this point is, "Are adolescents of high-school age contented with home entertainment?" A recent investigation of this point by Sister Rose Angela Horan[8] offers convincing evidence that high-school boys and girls are not only contented with home entertainment themselves, but state that their friends like it as well. Seventy-seven per cent of the girls and 71 per cent of the boys stated that they were happy and contented in spending their social recreation within the home, while 90 per cent of the girls and 63 per cent of the boys stated that their friends, likewise, liked home entertainment. It would seem that many of the difficulties of the adolescent which can be traced to questionable entertainment could be forestalled if parents were more willing to throw open their homes to the young friends of their sons and daughters.

Latchkey Problems

At the heart of the social-liberty problems of the adolescent lie the home regulations governing the permission to go out at night. Increasing age and attendance at high school bring to the boy in his teens a host of opportunities for new and wider social contacts. These new contacts acquaint him with the more liberal codes of social privilege maintained in the home of his friends, and hence act as a stimulant upon his own social desires.

Perhaps some of the severest conflicts the boy experiences during the period of his maturation are those centering in the question of the latchkey. Permission to make use of opportunities to exercise his recently sprouted desires for social activity mean so much to him that unwise handling on the part of the parent, either in the form of an exaggerated severity in the granting of social liberties or in the form of snooping, call forth violent reactions in his conduct. Outright disobedience, sullen stubbornness, an incommunicable introvertedness — any of these are likely to be noted in the adolescent unwisely handled on this point of the granting of social liberties. The important point is that the adolescent reacts in such unfortunate ways because he himself does not know how to solve a problem which appears to him at the moment to be all important.

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[8] *An Investigation of the Present-Day Ideals of Adolescents* (Indianapolis: Unpublished Master's Thesis, Indiana State Teachers College, 1938), 75.

The extent to which our adolescents of today regard this as one of their problems is shown in their replies to the following questions designed to elicit their reaction to the social privileges granted them in their homes. To the question, *Are you allowed out at night as often as you think a boy your age should be allowed out?* almost one fourth (23.4 per cent) answered "No," thus registering dissatisfaction with the amount of social liberty permitted them by their parents. Three per cent were uncertain as to whether they were satisfied or not, but the remainder, 73.5 per cent, felt that they were allowed out as often as others of their age. The importance with which adolescents regard this matter of their social liberties is evidenced by the fact that only one lad failed to answer this question.

It is true, this question is quite specific, referring to only one phase of the adolescent's social liberty, namely, being allowed out at night. Yet we feel that this is the main bone of contention when the adolescent's liberties are discussed. The term "social liberty" is wider in scope and includes other social privileges accorded the adolescent. For this reason, on another page of our problemmaire we asked the boy to give us his views on this wider application of the term. We put the questions, *Do you think you are allowed as many social liberties as other boys of your age?* and *If not, do you argue for more liberty?*

In the replies to the first of these two questions, we find a striking consistency with the answers given to the more specific question above dealing with permission to be out at night. We present the answers received to both for the reader's own comparison:

Question	*Yes*	*No*	*Doubtful*	*No answer*
Allowed out as often as you think you should be?	73.5%	23.4%	3.1%	.1%
Allowed as many social liberties as others?	69.8	27.3	2.7	.2

When we consider that the term "social liberty" embraces a wider field of social affairs necessitating parental permission, we should expect fewer boys to be satisfied with the *status quo* of their social liberties. This actually is the case as is seen from our findings above. Our second group of answers seems to confirm our previous assertion that one out of every four of our adolescents meets with a series of problems hinging on the question of his social liberties.

Among adolescent girls this problem is apparently present to only a slightly less degree than it is among boys, for in a recent investigation, 22.3 per cent of the girls stated that they thought they were allowed fewer social privileges than other girls their age.[9] We do not

[9] Sister Mildred Knoebber, O.S.B., *The Self-Revelation of the Adolescent Girl* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1936), 55–57.

hesitate to state that these findings are far from confirming the general picture that is usually presented by other writers on adolescence where the adolescent is shown as being on the verge of constant revolution against the old-fashioned overseverity of antisocial parents.

An interesting question prompted by the above data is the following: How does the adolescent react to those situations in which he feels he is not allowed those social liberties to which he feels himself entitled? Does refusal furnish a starting point for more intense problems, or does the boy reconcile himself to his parents' decision without further ado?

Desire for More Social Freedom

In asking those who felt that they were not allowed as many social liberties as other boys their age, whether or not they argued with their parents for more liberty, we received the following responses: 41.8 per cent of those who feel deprived say that they *frequently* argue for more liberty, 33.3 per cent say they do so but only *occasionally*, and 23.6 per cent simply accept their condition without further argument. In other words, three out of every four who are not satisfied with the social privileges accorded them argue with their parents for more liberty.

Interpreting our findings in the light of the general adolescent boy population, we have one out of every five arguing, at least occasionally, with his parents for more social freedom, while somewhat more than one out of every ten states that he *frequently* engages in this verbal combat.

The one figure that surprises us is the number (almost one fourth of the boys) that accept their plight without arguing, even though they feel themselves permitted fewer social liberties than are granted the average. On the surface, this is contrary to the adolescent nature. Can it be that this 6.3 per cent of the general adolescent boy population come from homes where the parents are so severe that further argument would only lead to an unbearable rift between parents and son? Or is it that this percentage of adolescents is easily satisfied? Or do they have such a laudable appreciation of obedience that they fear failing against this virtue? Perhaps it is a combination of all these, together with an admixture of a deep parental love which causes the adolescent to accept this social deprivation in preference to a break in the parent-son relationship.

It is interesting to note that a considerable number of adolescents, who, though they feel they enjoy as much liberty as the average boy of their age, nevertheless state that they argue more or less frequently with their parents for more social freedom. We are not prepared to state the exact reasons for this peculiarity in the adolescent's conduct, but perhaps this is just another manifestation of his love for verbal combat and of his desire for that feeling of exhilaration resulting from

triumph in the welcome battle of wits. Or, again, it may be that he feels this is the best way of making secure the liberties he now enjoys. Most probably, it is a combination of both these factors.

A Set Time to Be Home After a "Date"

Another difficulty in the relationship between parents and son, and one which proves a source of many difficulties particularly for the older adolescent, is the question of having a set time to be home after a "date." We attempted to measure the extent of problems in this field through the question, *Do your parents set a time for you to be in at night?* And then, to get an insight into how well discipline in the home is enforced, we asked a further question, *Are you in at that time?*

These two questions taken together give us a fairly good picture of the status of discipline in the homes of our modern adolescents. Current literature would have us believe that only a vestige of discipline remains in the home of today. Once more our findings go contrary to the popular notion.

According to our data, less than one out of five boys (18.1 per cent) comes from a home where the parents do not set a definite time for the boy to be in at night. Over half (56.4 per cent) reply unqualifyingly that their parents regularly set a time for them to be in, while slightly over one fourth (25.3 per cent) say that only on certain occasions are they told when to be in at night. There is a considerable difference, however, in the above replies, depending on the age of the adolescent; thus 70 per cent of the freshmen say they have a regular time when they have to be in the house at night, while only 46 per cent of the seniors say the same.

In comparing the replies of 3000 high-school girls to this same question, we find that they differ very little from the replies of the boys. For example, 56.4 per cent of the boys say that they have a set time to be home at night while 58.2 per cent of the girls say the same, although a few more girls than boys (23 per cent as compared with 18 per cent) are free to come and go as they please.[10]

Still more interesting are the replies received to our follow-up question regarding the adolescent's compliance with latchkey demands. These likewise throw favorable light on the discipline existing in the modern Catholic home. Naturally, the answers given to the question, *Are you in at that time?,* concern only those who have a given time to which to conform. Only one out of twenty (6 per cent) indicates that he is rarely in at the time set by his parents. All the others (93.5 per cent), except a half dozen who failed to answer, state that they comply with parental regulations, although there is a compromise

[10] Sister Mildred Knoebber, *op. cit.*, 58.

on the part of some of these (24.2 per cent) who say, "Sometimes I'm in on time and sometimes I'm not."

Viewing our results from the point of view of disobedience on the part of the boy, we find that 30.2 per cent of our adolescents disregard, at least occasionally, parental regulations in regard to the latchkey hour.

If these results lend themselves to any interpretation, it would seem that our homes still have a fairly good hold on our adolescents. Over two thirds of these young men declare that they conform regularly to the time set by their parents and almost all the rest state that they likewise conform, with the exception of an occasional "slipping up." Consequently, we have reason to sit back and arch a quizzical brow when modern pessimists complain that the family of today is rearing up a nation of disregarding, disobedient youth.

However, we are not unmindful that the first step toward decadence is a smug complaisance in the *status quo;* we realize that parental discipline in the home falls short of the ideal when we find 30 per cent of our adolescents disobeying at least occasionally, but the picture is not near so dark as it is often painted.

Parental Guidance of the Boy's Choice of Friends

Impulsive, overimpressed with externals, shortsighted as to consequences, driven on only by the desire for association with others of his own age, the adolescent readily forms friendships with whomever he comes into contact. Impressionable, imitative, a worshiper of heroes, he is readily influenced by his friends. For this reason a careful supervision on the part of the parents of these newly formed friendships is of vital importance for the boy's own good. But this very supervision may give rise to further conflicts between the boy and his parents. Especially is this true if parents try to supervise in detail every move in their son's relations with others. Such "snoopervision" usually results in rebellion and an excess of the very indulgence the parents wish to curb.

While the preadolescent submits willingly to parental guidance in the matter of friendships, the adolescent feels fully competent to select his own friends and therefore is inclined to resent rather than to follow adult guidance unless it be tactfully camouflaged. A measure of the extent to which our modern parents are exercising this function tactfully is found in the replies received to the question, *If your parents do not approve of your friends, do you stop going with them?* But first let us take note of the response to the question, *Do your parents approve of all your friends?*

Judging from the replies given in response to the latter question, it

would seem that parents are faithful in exercising their duty of supervising their son's friendships, for only 6.4 per cent of the boys indicated doubt about their parents' approval or disapproval of their friends. The others were very decisive in reply; 62.9 per cent say that their parents approve of their friends, while fewer than half as many (30.6 per cent) say that one or more of their friends do not meet with their parents' approval.

Disregarding Parental Disapproval of Friends

Now comes the interesting question of how well the adolescent complies with his parents' advice. Following up the question just considered with the query, *If your parents don't approve of your friends, do you stop going with them?* we received the following rather discouraging results. Of the 612 adolescents who stated that their parents did not approve of all their friends, 43.3 per cent say that they do not stop going with these friends; fewer than one fourth (22.9 per cent) state outright that they do comply and give up those friends who meet with their parents' disapproval; one out of every three (32.8 per cent) says, "Sometimes I do and sometimes I don't." The other 1 per cent offered no reply. It is true that it is difficult to interpret the meaning of those who say they "sometimes" comply with their parents' wishes. They may mean that they stop going with some of their friends, or, that they go with these friends less frequently now. At all events, the adolescent's respect for his parents' judgment in this matter does not present too bright a picture. Over three fourths of those whose friends have been disapproved of disregard their parents' disapproval, at least on occasion. To what extent the parents themselves are wrong or prejudiced in their disapproval we have no way of knowing; but it is well to keep in mind that such might be the condition in some of these cases.

Of course, it is well to remember that the picture of our general adolescent boy population is not so dark as the findings under consideration may make it appear. The three fourths that disregard parental disapproval represents less than one boy in four in the general high-school population.

Among the one fourth of the boys that disregard parental disapproval of their friends we note a decided age trend: the chances of a freshman disregarding his parents' wishes over abiding by them are 2 to 1, while the chances of a senior disregarding his parents' advice over following it are 7 to 1.

Factors in the Son's Disregard of Parental Opinion

What are the factors in this disregard of parental disapproval? There is evidently a strong manifestation of the adolescent's conviction that he is mature enough to judge for himself, that he knows

best when it comes to a choice of his own friends.[11] And judging from some of the remarks appended to the answers to the question we are considering, it would seem that the boy feels that his parents do not know his friends as well as he does, and that they are prejudiced and see only one side of his companions. Some of the boys seem to feel that the choice of their companions is a right which belongs solely to them and that others are merely interfering when they try to offer advice. This attitude, though apparently not too general, must be corrected. But the very fact that the problem exists is proof that the parents of these adolescents are failing to camouflage tactfully their efforts at guiding their son's choice of friends. Direct interference on their part creates in their son a bitter antagonism and precipitates clandestine meetings with those friends who meet their disapproval.

The problem for parents is how to camouflage their guidance. The easiest, most natural, and most effective way seems to be for them to invite their son's friends into their home and there let him observe his friends contrasted against his own family. It will not be long before he will be led to see for himself that to which verbal opposition on the part of parents would have only blinded him.

The fact that 23 per cent of the boys disregard on occasion their parents' advice may reflect a lack of appreciation of the virtue of obedience on their part. Could it be, perhaps, that with the gradual unfolding of their mental powers and their growing questioning and even skeptical attitude they do not understand in a satisfactory sense the reason why they should obey their parents? Answers received to the question, *Do you understand the "reason why" a boy should obey his parents in everything (provided it isn't wrong)?* do not confirm our supposition in this regard. Discounting a dozen who failed to reply, and the 1.5 per cent who were doubtful as to what to answer, we find 91 per cent replying in the affirmative, with only 6.9 per cent stating that they do not understand the reasons why a boy should obey his parents in everything.

These figures indicate a rather wholesome condition in the adolescents' thinking on this point. Perhaps the teachers who have taught these adolescents should take as much credit for this showing as the parents themselves. But at the same time, why is it that we have 6.9 per cent of our high-school boys who do not understand such a fundamental issue as the reason for obedience to their parents?

Authority in the Mind of the Adolescent

The adolescent desires to know the reason *why* behind requests. If he does not understand why he should obey his parents, every

[11] Luella Cole, *Psychology of Adolescence* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1942), 238–240.

parental request which does not correspond with his own thinking becomes another source of disrupting conflict. Unless the adolescent understands why he must obey, it will be difficult for him to accept the necessity of authority and its place as a necessary factor in the regulation of industrial and social life.

Because authority is one of the things young people most resent, its concept must be rebuilt and rendered acceptable to the adolescent, if it is to avail for good in his life. Rudolph Allers points out that there are two ways of making authority acceptable to him: "Authority may become established on the basis of personal relations, or it may become acceptable because its necessity is approved by reason."[12] It would seem, then, that in our efforts at helping adolescents solve their difficulties, we should lead them to see the reason back of parental authority and bring them to feel that rational obedience is desirable both in itself and in its consequences.

As a child, the adolescent-to-be accepted authority without question, because the only world he knew was a world in which authority regulated everything. Now, however, in his state of emergent manhood, he looks into a wider world and is willing to experiment. Having become aware of himself as an independent value, he is prompted to oppose authority and even to reject it. But this very rejection only serves to create a new problem (aside from the disobedience angle) because he is unable to replace authority by something else, thus leaving an irritating void which has an unstabilizing effect upon him. For this reason, the adolescent really welcomes authority, if the concept has been rebuilt in his mind on an intellectual plane. Once the adolescent has conceived the rational as well as the supernatural bases for authority, he looks to it as a stabilizing force in his life, as a warrant sanctioning his actions and justifying his conduct.[13]

Spending Money and Responsibility

Coming back to the discussion of liberties permitted the adolescent in the home, we shall consider the problem of spending money. For the boy in his middle teens, this problem assumes major proportions. For some years he has felt a need for a small weekly allowance, but now, with an enlarged circle of friends, more social activities, and an occasional "date" with his girl friend, this need becomes an indispensable necessity if he is to "keep face" with the crowd. Then, too, the boy's growing feeling of independence and desire to establish himslf as a person serve to emphasize his desire to have a little cash, even so little, which he can spend as he sees fit.

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[12] "Character Education in Adolescence," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review,* 39 (1938), 259.

[13] See *The Child and You,* F. J. Kieffer, S.M. (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1941), for an excellent treatment of the philosophy of authority.

In answer to our question, *Do you usually have some weekly spending money?* 85.4 per cent of the boys indicated that they did. In other words, the large majority of our adolescents usually receive a weekly allowance. For 14.2 per cent, however, this is not the case.

Today, the adolescent finds himself in an environment which renders it practically necessary that he have a certain amount of pocket money. Accordingly, the wise parent will make it possible for his son to provide himself with a weekly allowance. Hollingworth feels that it is a measure of mental hygiene to let every adolescent, regardless of sex, earn some money during this period.[14] Providing the boy with a small allowance, either directly or indirectly through a job, is one of the best ways of developing in him a sense of responsibility as well as initiating him into the practice of economy. Putting the adolescent on a budget and permitting him to buy his own clothes and other necessities adds to the value of this training. It is true that the boy will make mistakes but he will learn more from these mistakes than he will learn from mere advice. Significant gains in the social development of the adolescent are achieved through the allocation of minor personal responsibilities to the boy himself.

Opportunity and the Sense of Achievement

If the adolescent is not permitted to assume small responsibilities, he is bound to feel hampered and deprived of opportunities to establish himself in his relations with others in his expanding environment. The teen-age boy wants to be recognized, trusted, and wanted. He wants to be challenged and given a chance to achieve, for deep seated in his nature is the longing for assurance which comes with the sense of achievement. To give the subjects of our study an opportunity to express their reactions in this regard, we asked them the following question, *Do your parents give you opportunities to share responsibilities as much as you would like?*

By way of reply, almost one third of the boys (30.7 per cent) complain that they are not given such opportunities. Evidently the parents of these boys lack either patience or an appreciation of the fact that one learns to bear responsibilities mainly by practice in bearing them. But much more encouraging is the fact that 61.4 per cent state that their parents do take this interest in them. Of the remaining 7.9 per cent, fewer than a dozen failed to respond, while the others indicated a doubtful reply.

In a recent speech, J. Edgar Hoover, head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, pointed out that "every boy should be given certain definite duties to perform, for they help strip off the softness of childhood and start him on the road to manhood." Mr. Hoover

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[14] Leta S. Hollingworth, *The Psychology of the Adolescent* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1928), 93.

emphasized that "the home is not only a place of living, it is a place of learning. It is there and not in the school where children are fitted for the burdens they must bear later on." But if the home is to fulfill this mission, parents must be willing to share their responsibilities with their offspring.

Another angle to this question of the sharing of responsibility is brought forth by the remark of the senior who says, "I think that a boy of my age should be given a chance to prove to his father that he can carry the burden and responsibility of driving a car." There was no question on the "car problem" in the problemmaire. Nevertheless, the number of spontaneous comments on this problem offers sufficient evidence that many boys are upset emotionally, and to no little extent, by being refused the use of the family car.

Inability to Meet Parental Expectations

At the other end of the question of the sharing of responsibility are those problems which the adolescent experiences because of his parents' expecting too much from him. The incidence of such problems is shown by the answers to the question, *Does your family expect more from you than you can ordinarily accomplish?* Nearly eight out of every ten boys (79.1 per cent) say that they find no reason to complain in this matter, but one out of every six (16.5 per cent) does report this as one of his problems.

In most cases this problem is concerned with the boy's inability to meet his parents' expectation in regard to report card grades. Apparently some of the parents have higher ambitions than their son's ability can justify; hence the boy's feelings of chagrin, disappointment, and defeat when his achievement falls below their expectations.

Such failure on the part of the boy may prompt severe reprimands from his parents. No one would deny that occasional scoldings are rightful and proper, but where they are given so frequently that they become chronic, the boy is likely to become disheartened in his efforts to meet their demands. A measure of the extent to which the boys of our study feel that they are subjected to frequent scoldings is had in the replies to our question, *Are you frequently scolded by either or both of your parents?*

Four out of ten (39 per cent) answer "Yes," over half (55.2 per cent) "No," one in twenty (5.6 per cent) doubtful, and four boys offer no reply whatsoever. We make no comment on these figures other than the fact that they merely show us the incidence of "frequent scoldings" in the modern adolescent's home life.

To obtain a better grasp of the various conditions in the parent-son relationship which are likely to cause problems in the adolescent's life, we present in Figure 4 a graphic summary of the main facts brought forward in this chapter.

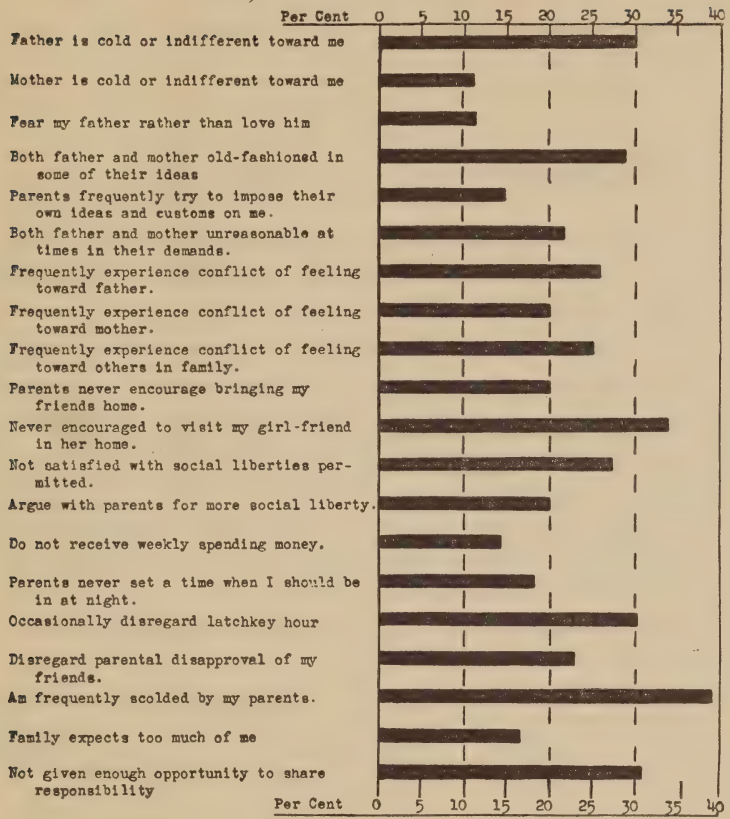
Per Cent
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40
Father is cold or indifferent toward me
Mother is cold or indifferent toward me
Fear my father rather than love him
Both father and mother old-fashioned in some of their ideas
Parents frequently try to impose their own ideas and customs on me.
Both father and mother unreasonable at times in their demands.
Frequently experience conflict of feeling toward father.
Frequently experience conflict of feeling toward mother.
Frequently experience conflict of feeling toward others in family.
Parents never encourage bringing my friends home.
Never encouraged to visit my girl-friend in her home.
Not satisfied with social liberties permitted.
Argue with parents for more social liberty.
Do not receive weekly spending money.
Parents never set a time when I should be in at night.
Occasionally disregard latchkey hour
Disregard parental disapproval of my friends.
Am frequently scolded by my parents.
Family expects too much of me
Not given enough opportunity to share responsibility
Per Cent
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40

Figure 4. Summary of problem-prompting conditions in the parent-son relationship.

Chapter 6

THE PROBLEM OF BEING MISUNDERSTOOD

We now turn to the last phase of our discussion on the problems arising out of the boy's relations with his parents, namely, those hinging upon his feelings of being misunderstood.

Perhaps no other factor plays a larger role in lessening the rapport between the adolescent and his parents than the former's feeling of not being understood by the latter. The extent to which the boy will approach his parents is dependent upon the parents' general attitude toward him; if their general manner is patient and sympathetic, the boy feels he is understood, but if cold, harsh, cryptic, or unsympathetic, he feels he is misunderstood. And if the adolescent once becomes convinced that he is misunderstood, a complete change of feeling toward his parents comes over him, resulting in an antipathetic attitude which might not be changed readily.

Extent to Which Boys Feel They Are Not Understood by Parents

Writers on adolescence tell us that feelings of not being understood are rather common in adolescents. Our investigation of this point fails to contradict this opinion. The questions which we presented, together with the percentage results, are given in the following table.

TABLE 3. Opinions of 2000 Boys as to Whether They Feel Their Parents Understand Their Difficulties

Question	*Yes*	*No*	*Uncertain*	*No answer or question was inapplicable*
Do you feel that your father understands your difficulties?	51.5%	26.4%	13.3%	8.8%
Do you feel that your mother understands your difficulties?	67.8	17.3	10.6	4.3

According to Table 3, only half of the boys feel certain that their father understands their difficulties, while one fourth feel certain that he does not. But this situation is somewhat relieved by the fact that two out of every three feel that their mother understands their difficulties. However, one out of every six does not.

When we divide our data according to age groups, we detect a consistent trend for more and more boys as they become older to feel

less understood by their parents. Thus, the 59 per cent of the freshmen who feel that their father understands their difficulties and the 74 per cent who feel the same way about their mother decrease by regular steps to 44 per cent and 60 per cent respectively among the seniors. This trend appears to continue on about the same plane during later adolescence, for an investigation of this question on the college level reports that only 44 per cent of 444 subjects feel that their parents understand them and their problems.[1]

Our findings represent a subjective appraisal of the extent to which parents fail to understand their son's difficulties. This appraisal is not objective. This data gives us an insight into the boy's own reactions to his parents and his view of how well he feels they understand his problems; and in so far as it does that, it gives us a clear view of the extent to which the adolescent is confronted with an intensely important problem. Few problems which the adolescent has to face have a more disintegrating, disheartening, and souring effect upon his personality than that of his feeling misunderstood by those nearest and dearest to him. When he first comes upon this realization, the bottom falls out of his ambitions and future plans. There are so many things that appear vague and puzzling, both within himself and in the world at large, that he is definitely nonplused when he finds his parents too preoccupied and apparently uninterested in problems of his which to him are tantamount to any difficulties his parents themselves might experience. As a result, all his problems become more intensified and are felt so much more keenly — to such an extent at times that he is driven into periods of moodiness bordering on moroseness.

Fortunately, such is not the picture of the majority of our adolescents, as our findings show, but the number comprising the minority is still far too large. Parents can remove this difficulty where it does exist only by being sympathetic. Even though they recognize the boy's difficulty as a mere trifle, a molehill which he sees as a mountain, nevertheless, they make a mistake if they do not regard his difficulty with the same grave concern as he himself regards it.

Reasons for Misunderstanding According to the Boy

It is interesting to note the causes which boys feel lie behind the failure of some parents to understand their sons. Their opinions in this matter were brought forth by the question, *What do you think are the reasons why boys are sometimes misunderstood by parents?*

Not all replied to this question; about one fourth, the majority of whom were freshmen and sophomores, seem to have been nonplused at the moment as to why some parents misunderstand boys, or why

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[1] Francis J. Friedel, S.M., *The Home Adjustments of a Selected Group of College Men*, 104.

they themselves are misunderstood. It is this failure of adolescents to understand why others do not understand them which makes the problem of being misunderstood all the more poignant. Some of these, however, interpreted the question as referring strictly to their own parents, and not feeling misunderstood by them regarded the question

TABLE 4. Reasons Why Parents Misunderstand Their Sons According to the Opinion of 1532 Adolescents

Reason	*Per cent**
1. Parents do not know the boy well enough	30.3
Don't know all his difficulties, the things he has to face, the circumstances under which he acts	13.9
Don't know the boy of today, his wants and needs	5.5
Don't realize the boy is grown up, treat him like a child	3.4
Forget the things they did and the fact that they were once young	2.9
Never had to face the things we have to face	2.8
Expect boys to be angels, "think I'm better than others"	1.8
2. Boy is not confidential or frank enough with his parents	29.1
Not frank enough, doesn't give parents details of his difficulties, does not tell them everything	14.2
Not confidential enough	12.3
Afraid to confide fully, afraid to ask questions and tell the details of his problems, bashful	2.6
3. Parents are from a different age and old fashioned	26.5
Old fashioned in their ideas and ways; think we must do as they did; they don't understand modern things	17.9
Forget that times have changed; they've been reared differently	8.6
4. Boys feel they are different, have different ideas, different viewpoints than parents	17.4
Have different ideas and viewpoints, different feelings, different slant on life because of the difference between our ages	10.5
Are of a different age with ideas which parents do not understand	6.9
5. Parents are not chummy enough, not interested, and don't take our difficulties seriously	14.8
Don't try to understand the boy, are not interested enough in him	5.7
Do not associate enough with the boy, not chummy nor friendly enough	5.2
Don't take our difficulties seriously, underrate them	3.9
6. Miscellaneous: boy's own fault, difficulty in expressing self, different views on girl friends, mistinterpret boy's actions	8.5

* Percentage figured on the basis of the 1532 boys reporting.

as inapplicable. So the reasons presented in Table 4 — nearly 2000 of them — were offered by a few more than 1500 adolescents. All the replies were of the essay type and were as varied as the individuals themselves. But the majority of reasons advanced can be classified under the headings that appear in Table 4.

A brief analysis of Table 4 shows that almost seven out of ten place the blame for being misunderstood on the parents, stating that parents do not know the boy well enough, that they are old fashioned in their ideas, that they are not chummy enough with their son. Somewhat fewer than three out of ten (29 per cent) place the blame on the boy himself, admitting that the boy is not frank enough with his parents, or simply stating that "it is the boy's own fault." About one in seven feels that such misunderstanding cannot be avoided since different ideas and ways of looking at life are bound to result from such a difference in age.

These reasons give a cross-section view of the modern boy's opinions as to why parents misunderstand the boy; but in presenting his reasons in such a summary form we lose much of the individuality of the response and a certain amount of the meaning. For this reason, we present a sampling of these opinions as they come direct from the boys themselves:

My parents forget that they were once young and had difficulties in their youth themselves; they think my troubles are childish, but I think otherwise.

Times have changed and they don't realize it. They think I should do what they did when they were young.

They think I am so much better than other boys I go around with.

We like to do what the other fellows do and can't make our parents understand this; they don't realize that what a boy's friends think of him means a lot to him.

It is chiefly due to a difference in age, education, and outlook, and because parents do not come into contact with the peculiar things that influence modern boys.

Boys don't tell it all.

Parents think only in terms of what happened when they were young and therefore cannot see the problems which we boys have.

Just because we act wild at times our parents think we are.

Because they never had to meet the problems we have to meet today.

Boys do not explain their difficulties nor tell their parents everything they should. They shield certain facts from them; if they were frank and above board it might be different.

Parents have bullheaded ideas on certain things and don't try to see the way we do.

They think we should be perfect but they don't know the temptations we have to go through.

Parents do not get together often enough with their children.

Sometimes it's the boy's fault, but I think they misunderstand a boy because they don't try to know him, his feelings, dislikes, etc.

I think it is because the boy beats around the bush too much.

My parents are from a different country and don't know much about modern boys and their temptations.

Because the age we live in is entirely different from when they were young — we are faced with pleasures that never affected them.

Problems that are important to the boy seem silly to his parents.

They expect me to stand by the same commands that they received from their own father and mother 30 years ago.

My parents never have heart-to-heart talks with me and therefore do not know what I think.

Some parents are too much interested in their own pleasures — out drinking instead of taking an active interest in their son's doings.

They don't realize we know as much about things as we do and so try to hide things from us. My mother would be shocked if she knew the things I know of.

Because parents do not pay attention to the things that seem important to *you!*

A boy of my age has different ideals than his father has.

Things in the United States are different from the customs in Ireland of 40 years ago.

Because they didn't do certain things when they were young they think I shouldn't either. They think I'm still in knee pants.

Parents can't understand the newer generation because when they were our age they never had to go through the same experiences.

Throughout the responses, the upperclassmen seem to manifest stronger feelings on this question of being misunderstood than do the freshmen and sophomores. The seniors particularly emphasize the fact that the parents do not associate enough with their son, that they do not try to understand, and that they do not realize the boy is grown up. At the same time they stress the boy's lack of frankness as a principal factor in parental misunderstanding.

It is interesting to note that a fair number of boys expressed the wish that their parents might see what they wrote in answering this problemmaire. Some felt that their parents would understand them much better if what they wrote could, in some manner, be placed in their parents' hands. The following are typical of those commenting in this manner:

This problemmaire could be very helpful if its results were brought to our parents' attention so they could more readily understand what we think.

I think that if these were signed and sent to the parents of the boy unknown to him that they would help the boy's father and mother understand him a whole lot better. I should also like to see the book in which the results of this investigation will appear.

This is one swell idea. I wish I could show this to my parents. It might help them some to understand me better.

You should have parents also fill out one of these in front of their sons. It would put them in our place and make them think.

I only hope all parents get a hold of the reports made from these tests.

I wish my parents could see this without knowing who wrote it.

Extent to Which Boys Confide in Their Parents

We have a good barometer of the rapport existing between the boy and his parents, as well as an indication of his confidence in them, in our findings concerning the extent to which he discusses his difficulties and personal problems with his parents. These findings are presented in the following table.

TABLE 5. Frequency With Which 2000 Boys Discuss Their Personal Problems With Their Parents

Question	*Frequently*	*Occasionally*	*Rarely*	*No answer or question was inapplicable*
Do you discuss your difficulties and personal problems with your father?	14.3%	28.2%	48.9%	8.6%
Do you discuss your difficulties and personal problems with your mother?	27.7	32.0	36.3	4.0

According to these figures, only four out of ten (42.5 per cent), at least on occasion, discuss their personal difficulties with their father, while nearly six out of ten (59.7 per cent) do so with their mother. It is worthy of note that the number of boys who discuss their problems with their mother is 17.1 per cent greater than the number of those who discuss their problems with their father. This is a bit surprising since one would expect the boy entering into manhood to consult his father more frequently. Yet, these findings are perfectly in accord with the replies received to a previous question in which we noted that the number of boys who thought that their mother understood their difficulties was 16.3 per cent greater than the number of those who thought the same about their father.

We note also from a glance at Figure 5 that the boys who consult their father and mother on personal problems are from 8 to 9 per cent

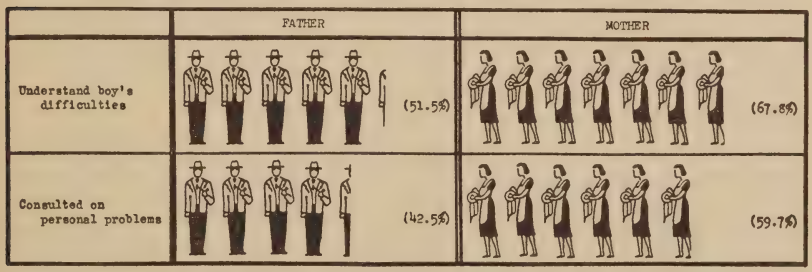

Figure 5. Extent to which parents understand their sons and are consulted by them. Each symbol represents the opinion of 10 per cent of the boys studied.

less in number than those who feel their father and mother understand their difficulties. That is, where 51.5 per cent of the boys declare that their father understands their difficulties only 42.5 per cent consult him. Where 67.8 per cent of the boys state that their mother understands their difficulties, only 59.7 per cent consult her.

Hence, the feeling that his parents do not understand him is not the only cause for the boy's failure to consult them. A number of

factors are involved: Some of the boys stated in appended remarks that they did not feel the need of consulting their parents; others, that their parents were too busy; that they themselves were too bashful; and that their parents were cold and hard to approach in these matters. But the sad fact remains that nearly half of our high-school boys fail to discuss their difficulties with their father and over one third fail to talk over their problems with their mother.

However, when we study our data in greater detail, we find that one third of those who do not confide in their mother do confide in their father. But 24.6 per cent of the boys discuss their problems neither with their father nor with their mother.

Further, an age trend becomes quite evident when our data is classified according to age groups. Where we find 44 per cent of the freshmen failing to consult their father on their problems and 33 per cent failing to consult their mother, we have 54 per cent and 41 per cent respectively among the seniors. It would seem, then, that during the four years of high school, the distance between parents and son is widened to the extent that 10 per cent fewer boys consult their parents on their problems at the end of high school than the number who do so at the beginning.

From the above data it would seem that the main step in remedying the situation must be taken by the parents themselves. They must so change their manner of dealing with their son that he becomes convinced that they are interested in him, that they do understand his difficulties.

But to what extent do those boys who do discuss their difficulties with their parents approve of the way their parents try to guide them? What is the general reaction of adolescents to the guidance which parents offer?

Adolescent's Appraisal of Parental Guidance

To survey the adolescents' appraisal of parental guidance we asked these questions: *Do you approve of the way your parents try to guide you?* and *If not, what don't you like about their method?* A summary of the answers to the first question shows us the gratifying fact that 84.2 per cent of the boys do approve of the way their parents try to guide them. (See Fig. 6.) The answers to this question would seem to carry considerable weight, for their opinion in this matter determines by and large the effect which parental guidance is likely to have. If the boy disapproves of his parents' methods, little of what they say or do will have any lasting effect upon his attitude or conduct. This latter condition, however, seems to obtain in one tenth of the homes, for 10.7 per cent of the boys stated that they disapproved of their parents' methods of guidance. Here, again, we note a distinct age trend, for many more upperclassmen than underclassmen complain of the way their parents are trying to guide them.

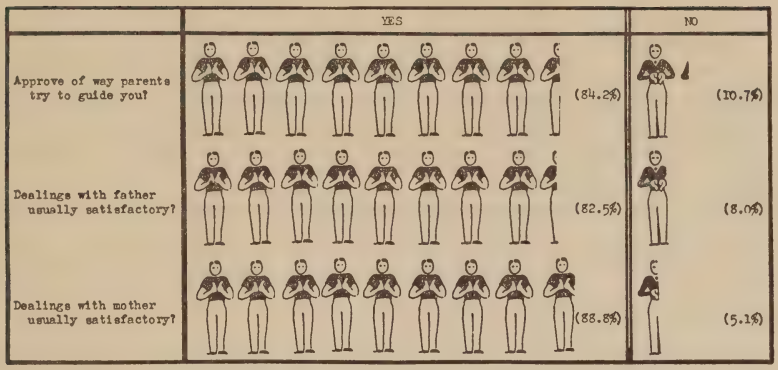

Figure 6. General appraisal of parents' efforts. Each symbol represents the opinion of 10 per cent of the boys studied.

What is it in the parents' efforts at guidance that adolescents do not like? This is precisely what we asked of the 10.7 per cent who disapproved of the way their parents tried to guide them. Because their reasons are so varied, we made no attempt to tabulate their replies; but the following remarks are characteristic of those who do not like the way their parents attempt to guide them:

My parents are out of date and they're trying to model me after another fellow who is what I call a "sissy."

They're always trying to tell me what to do when I want to figure out things for myself.

Too tyrannical and expect the impossible from me.

They don't give me enough responsibility — just as if they didn't trust me.

They have no consideration at all for my reasons.

That's it, they don't guide me.

They watch every move I make.

I think I'm old enough to know what's good for me.

Just tell me instead of reasoning with me and telling me why.

They try to help too much.

They don't consider my feelings.

My father can never boss me without shouting to the roof tops.

Don't teach me anything, just feed and house me, and their example isn't any too good.

They're not strict enough with me — too changeable.

Mother is fine but Dad is a weak character and doesn't give a darn what I do.

They beat about the bush too much instead of telling me right out certain things which I have to find out from others.

Too strict with me and don't permit me any social liberties.

Treat me as a child.

They are raising me in a slipshod way.

Mother gives me too much liberty.

They allow me to do what I like instead of giving me good advice.

They don't encourage me enough in my religious duties.

General Appraisal of the Boy's Relations With His Parents

In order to obtain from the boy a general appraisal of all his relations with his father and mother we asked him to answer the following summary questions: *Have your dealings with your father usually been satisfactory?* and *Have your dealings with your mother usually been satisfactory?*

The answers to these questions are graphically summarized in Figure 6. Our hopes for the future generation spring high as we find eight out of every ten boys (82.5 per cent) declaring that their dealings with their father have usually been satisfactory. And our hopes soar still higher as we note nearly nine out of every ten (88.8 per cent) declaring the same about their dealings with their mother. Only 8 per cent state that their relations with their father have not usually been satisfactory while still fewer (5.1 per cent) state the same with respect to their mother. The remaining were either unable to give a general appraisal of their relations with their parents, or found the questions inapplicable.

As we have noted previously, the boy's relations with his mother are usually more satisfactory than with his father. Perhaps this is because, as the boys themselves state, there is more mutual confidence between mother and son than there is between father and son. Our findings on this point are not unique, for Friedel[2] found this same tendency to hold true even on the college level.

In the chapters which dealt with problems of the boy in the realm of the home, the findings, in general, showed that about 10 per cent of the boys were dissatisfied with and rather seriously maladjusted in their home environment. The other 90 per cent of the boys are fairly well adjusted to their home environment. They have problems, it is true, and some more serious than others, but never in a combination so intense as to outweigh completely the compensations and consolations that are offered by their surroundings in the home. Hence, we may conclude this chapter in an optimistic vein and say that though there are flaws in the modern adolescent's home life, yet it is far from what it has been pictured by many modern pessimists. The home still is a powerful influence for good and the center of the adolescent's life.

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[2] Francis J. Friedel, S.M., *op. cit.*, 87.

III

PROBLEMS OF THE BOY IN THE SCHOOL

Chapter 7

GUIDANCE AND THE ADOLESCENT'S PROBLEMS

It is generally agreed that an essential function of the school is to cooperate with the home in training the child for successful living in the truest sense. The principal purpose of this section is to ascertain whether the adolescent thinks that the school is successfully carrying out this function. At the same time, we wish to see to what extent the entire high-school environment is operative as a factor in bringing about the problems which he experiences during his teen years. We likewise wish to find out the extent to which the various areas of the boy's high-school relations render his life more difficult.

Educators Must See the Adolescent's World Through the Boy's Eyes

To deal successfully with adolescents, we must understand them as they really are. We must not only view them from the standpoint of adults. We must see the world as they see it, and this means that we must obtain their opinions and their reactions to our present educational efforts. There is no period of life more difficult to deal with on a practical basis than adolescence. To adopt a passive attitude toward the adolescent's problems and points of view, therefore, would be the height of folly, for we must remember that it is fundamentally and solely for the adolescent that the high school exists.

Before engaging in the task of molding character, we must know not only the nature of the adolescent, but, likewise, what reactions are called forth within his inner self to our educational endeavors. As Allers points out, "many educational difficulties met with in the years of adolescence could be avoided if those responsible had access to the more intimate experiences of youth."[1] The need for this intimate knowledge of youth is emphasized by a recent study which produced the evidence that high-school teachers know less than one fourth of the facts about their pupils which educators, guidance specialists, and psychologists consider of importance in the educational treatment of the individual pupils.[2]

The more information we can obtain concerning the nature of the adolescent, his problems, his interests, and his needs, the more light

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[1] *The Psychology of Character,* 275.

[2] H. L. Baker, "High School Teachers' Knowledge of Their Pupils," *School Review,* 46 (1938), 175–190.

we shall throw on all high-school problems. The adolescent's comments on his problems as he finds them in the high school should give us a keen appreciation of his inner difficulties. His candid reactions to the current program in the modern Catholic high school should give us a better insight into the influence our efforts are having on the struggle going on within him, in which grace and fallen nature are contending for the shaping of his character and the ultimate possession of his soul.

Entrance into high school sets the stage for a number of previously unexperienced problems for the boy, and changes going on within him are revolutionizing his thoughts, feelings, and attitudes toward all with which he is coming into contact. Therefore it is essential to know not only the opinions of those on top, critics, administrators, teachers, but likewise the opinions of those underneath, the pupils in our schools who, willing or not, are taking what we have to offer. To effect optimum results, we must take cognizance of the reactions from the underside as well.

If one of the chief educational functions of the school is the production of receptivity in our pupils to positive influences, then it is important that we know to what extent our present efforts are fostering a favorable attitude to positive educational forces, or in what way and to what extent our efforts are prompting a negative reaction to these influences.

If the boy in his teens feels that he is not understood by his teachers, if he feels that religion is being taught in a manner which does not render it applicable to his everyday life, if he feels that the education he is receiving is not preparing him for life, if he is of the opinion that the school is not helping him to settle the question of his vocation, and furthermore, has no opportunity of receiving guidance, we can hardly expect him to cooperate wholeheartedly with our efforts to make him a man of character.

But, to what extent do these problems lessen the influence of the secondary school? To what extent do they complicate the adolescent's gradual emergence into adulthood?

Guidance in the School

Percentage That Have Settled the Question of Vocation

In bringing forth our findings which answer the above questions, we shall first treat the problems that are concerned with the question of the adolescent's future lifework, for it is this question that lies along the forefront of teen-age consciousness. Hence the boy is ever on the lookout for hints and helps which may aid him in settling this problem. Naturally, if this question occupies his mind considerably, it would be interesting to know what percentage of our adolescents have settled this matter, and if they have not, to what extent this is a source of

worry for them. Table 6 gives the percentages of those who have settled the question of their future lifework for both the entire high-school population and the four high-school groups separately.

It is worthy of note that there is apparently little difference among the high-school groups with respect to the percentage of students who have settled the question of their vocation. The slight difference that does occur is greatest between the juniors, who have 350 out of 500 (70 per cent), as compared with 322 out of 500 (64.4 per cent) for the seniors, who state definitely that they have not as yet settled the question of their vocation.

TABLE 6. Percentage of Students on Various High-School Levels Who Have Settled the Question of Their Vocation

Class	*Yes*	*No*	*Don't know*	*No answer*
Freshmen	25.6%	65.6%	8.4%	.4%
Sophomores	23.6	68.4	7.6	.4
Juniors	21.2	70.0	8.8	.0
Seniors	25.6	64.4	9.6	.4
All Classes	24.0	67.1	8.6	.3

Hence the juniors stand first, having the greatest number for whom this question is still an unsolved problem, then come the sophomores, freshmen, and finally the seniors. If these figures merit any interpretation it would seem that the reason why there are as many freshmen as seniors who feel that they have settled this question lies in the fact that these freshmen, for the time being, have their future roughly mapped out since they have decided on high school, and in so far as this means a preparation for later life, it may imply in their minds, even though as yet vaguely, decision on some vocation. But, as some get deeper into this preparation for the future, the definiteness of their previous decision gives way to indecision, reaching a peak in the junior year. Then, as graduation looms up, pressure is brought to bear upon them for a more definite decision, with the result that a few more than one fourth of the seniors say they have come to a decision on their lifework.

Boys Worry About Their Future

With more than two out of every three high-school students unsettled in their choice of a vocation, a rather large field for vocational guidance would seem to exist. The extent to which these two thirds of our students find this indecision a problem serious enough to worry about is shown in Table 7. In analyzing this table, the reader will observe several significant points.

First, indecision in respect to one's lifework is definitely a problem for every group in the high school. Over three out of every four pupils who have not decided upon their vocation state that they worry about

TABLE 7. Extent to Which Boys Who Have Not Settled the Question of Their Future Lifework Worry About This Problem

Class	*Worry frequently*		*Worry occasionally*		*Total who worry*	
Freshmen	28.3%	*19.2%**	41.0%	*27.2%**	69.3%	*46.4%**
Sophomores	29.6	*20.0*	38.1	*25.2*	67.7	*45.2*
Juniors	38.7	*25.8*	46.6	*31.0*	85.3	*56.8*
Seniors	47.4	*31.6*	38.2	*25.4*	85.6	*57.0*
All classes	36.0	*24.7*	40.5	*27.2*	76.5	*51.3*

	Worry rarely		*No answer*	
Freshmen	27.4%	*18.8%**	1.2%	*.8%**
Sophomores	33.4	*22.4*	.6	*.4*
Juniors	19.4	*12.8*	.0	*.0*
Seniors	11.3	*7.6*	.6	*.4*
All classes	22.9	*15.4*	.6	*.4*

* Figures in italics refer to the percentage they represent in the general high-school population.

this matter. With more than one out of every three, however, this problem becomes so serious as to be a source of frequent worry.

Second, there is a definite trend within the high-school population for this problem of undecided vocation to become a matter for more serious concern as the individual advances through high school. Among those freshmen and sophomores whose vocation is not decided, we find roughly seven out of ten who worry over this matter, while this proportion rises to almost nine out of every ten among the juniors and seniors.

Third, according to Table 7, those who have not as yet decided on their future lifework and who worry over this problem constitute over one half (51.3 per cent) of the general high-school boy population. And for almost one out of every four boys in our high schools (24.1 per cent) this problem is serious enough to cause them frequent worry. The juniors and seniors have the largest proportion in this regard.

These figures are based only on the replies of those who stated definitely that they had not as yet selected their future lifework. Hence, the 24 per cent of our pupils who stated that they had chosen their vocation are not included in the above. However, it would be a mistake to think that these boys are not concerned over this matter. Even though they state that they have settled this question, it is still a problem over which about one half of these worry occasionally; but for only a rare few of these is it a matter of frequent worry.

Summarizing our findings, we may say that over two thirds of the boys in our high schools are not settled on the question of their vocation, and for three out of four of these, this problem is serious enough to become a source of worry; but when we consider the percentage that these represent in the entire high-school boy population, this proportion of three out of four falls to slightly more than

one out of every two. Now, when we include with the above the one fourth who have already decided this question, the proportion of all boys in our high schools for whom the problem of vocation is a matter of at least occasional worry jumps to almost two out of every three (63.4 per cent).

The reader will understand, of course, that when an adolescent says that he has decided on his vocation, he means that actually he has quieted a state of restless indecision within him relative to this problem, for a period more or less long. In most instances, his choice will shift many times before he finally settles on a satisfactory calling. It is the opinion of Schumacher that "90 per cent of the high school students are looking for white collar jobs, although only about 10 per cent will find employment at such jobs."[3] Hence, many will have to shift their choice through force of circumstances. This, of course, is to be expected, for it appears that many choose their vocation without regard either for existing employment opportunities or for their own aptitudes; thus the necessity for wise vocational guidance during these years becomes evident.

The need for vocational guidance is accentuated during the final year in high school, for it is at this time that a larger number are forced to make a decision regarding their future. According to a recent investigation in which this problem was studied among 2500 recently graduated seniors, it was found that 76 per cent of these had made a definite vocational choice.[4] Our results show that only one third as many had settled this problem at the beginning of the senior year, the time when our problemmaire was administered. Hence, it would seem that during this final year, an additional 50 per cent of the senior students fight their way to this decision. Such evidence should stir our high-school administrators to place at the student's disposal, particularly the senior's, a full supply of representative occupational information,[5] as well as wide opportunities for occupational and vocational guidance.

More "Heart-to-Heart" Talks

That the students feel a need for this guidance is evidenced by the number who asked for "more 'heart-to-heart' talks in private, and more and better occupational guidance." The following comments are typical:

> I am a senior and have no idea of what I want to do or can do, and therefore will go out into the world insufficiently prepared to face the prob-

[3] H. C. Schumacher, *The Adolescent,* 45.

[4] *The High School Senior — His Reaction to the Program of Studies* (New York: South-Western Publishing Co., 1938), 15.

[5] *Occupational Outlines of America's Major Occupations* (Chicago, 1700 Prairie Ave.: Science Research Associates, 1940). Also: *Career Monographs* (Chicago, 537 S. Dearborn St.: The Institute for Research).

Figure 7. School as a help in settling vocations. Each symbol represents the opinion of 5 per cent of the high-school population.

lems of making a livelihood. Why doesn't the school have someone to whom I can go for guidance and talk "heart to heart" on these matters?

I am puzzled as to what I should do. I wish our school would have an adviser, a man whom I could talk over things with.

I believe that Catholic schools should have advisers and job guides. They should take more of an individual attitude toward their students, that is, find out what we would like to do. The teachers seem never to have time to sit and talk with you or advise you — they never talk with you but always at you, commanding, etc., and I have so much I would like to talk about and find out.

Priests and teachers should try to get us to speak. Once we start, we'll tell all. But it's awfully hard to start. They ought to tear down their front and let us see them as warmhearted advisers. We need all the advice we can receive on sex, religion, and vocation, if only it would be given to us. Then we would know where we stand. Is it that they don't realize we are grown up?

The above comments were made by seniors. It is evident that the student who wrote this last comment had more than vocational guidance in mind, but this does not detract from the point he was trying to make. Both upperclassmen and underclassmen expressed need for vocational guidance, but the former were slightly more insistent in their pleas than the latter.

Help From the School in Settling Vocation

The above comments represent about half of the high-school boy population, for 46.6 per cent stated that the school had not helped them toward settling the question of their future lifework, while an additional 12.5 per cent did not know whether the school helped them in this matter or not. (See Fig. 7.) Forty per cent, however, affirmed that the school helped them toward the settling of this problem. It is interesting to note that the decline is consistent among those who feel

that the school has helped them toward settling the question of their future lifework: freshmen, 45 per cent; sophomores, 41.2 per cent; juniors, 37.6 per cent; and seniors, 36 per cent.

Note that the percentage of high-school students who state that they have received help from the school in this matter falls 9 per cent by the time the boy reaches the senior year. Just what does this mean? It would seem that as the boys progress through the high school, a number become disillusioned as to the help they previously thought the school was giving them. For some it may be that as freshmen they considered being orientated into a definite course as a help in this matter; but, already as sophomores, some realize that the assistance derived therefrom was not as helpful as they had anticipated.

Our findings seem to be confirmed by a recent study[6] which reports that 34.3 per cent of the subjects, the majority of whom were high-school seniors, stated that they had received some type of vocational guidance from their school, while our findings show that 36 per cent of the seniors of our study affirmed the same. The fact that a higher percentage of students in our study report having received guidance seems to be in keeping with the findings of Walter Crosby Eells,[7] who, after questioning over 17,000 high-school students on this matter of guidance, concludes that pupils in private schools receive more counseling than public-school pupils. Though Eells's findings are complimentary to the Catholic high-school system, still, our results show that much remains to be done in the way of extending our guidance activities.

In a recent investigation into the extent of vocational guidance in Catholic secondary schools, it is reported that of 1004 Catholic high schools, 50 per cent are offering vocational guidance while an additional 10 per cent offer some sort of individual guidance.[8] This investigation also reports that the weakest phase in the vocational guidance of the Catholic high school is the presentation of occupational information. It is interesting to note that this complaint is dominant in the pleading comments of many of the subjects of our study.

If the writer seems to emphasize the importance of guidance, it is because the findings of the present study emphasize the need of it. With two out of three boys in our schools considerably concerned about their future lifework, but with only 40 per cent claiming any help from the school, it is evident that our high schools are passing over a large number of students with unsolved problems in this field. This

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[6] Howard M. Bell, *Youth Tell Their Story* (Washington, D. C.: The American Council on Education, 1938), 74. (2600 of the subjects of this study were students.)

[7] "Pupil Judgment on Value of Guidance Received," *School Review*, 46 (1938), 265–275.

[8] Sister M. Teresa Gertrude Murray, *Vocational Guidance in Catholic Secondary Schools* (New York: Columbia University, Teachers College Contributions to Education, 754, 1938), *passim*.

conclusion is further supported by the replies received from the adolescents of 48 high schools in answer to the request that they state what they thought to be their greatest needs.[9] "The right kind of guidance" was emphasized as one of their gravest wants. The past few decades have seen an increase in the size and heterogeneity of the high-school population. This phenomenon accentuates the adolescent's great need today for expert guidance not only in the choice of a vocation but also in his other problems.

What complicates the work of guidance (in fact, makes it all the more pressing) is, as Allers points out, the fact that "the adolescent has but a very incomplete knowledge of the world or of himself, and even this incomplete knowledge cannot be utilized because of its inconstancy."[10] It is this characteristically adolescent instability and lack of knowledge of self which underlies much of the adolescent's anxiety relative to his vocational problems. All of these facts point to the necessity of organized guidance. As our findings show, too many of our schools leave this important function to chance opportunities. Homer P. Rainey states that "75 per cent of all youth do not receive anything that could be called adequate guidance."[11] Too many feel that education will take care of this matter somewhere along the line. But, "education is not yet an automatic process; there must be organized personal responsibility for guidance."[12] Without this appointed responsibility, the burden of guidance will be dodged by the teachers[13] with the result that either the development of the boy's personality will be hindered because of increased tensions created by unsolved problems, or he will seek out others from whom he hopes to receive the counsel he feels the need of so keenly.

Sources From Which Adolescents Seek Guidance

Who are these other individuals from whom the boy seeks guidance? Before putting this question to the boys, we inquired into the extent to which guidance is actually sought from anyone regarding future

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[9] "The Needs of American Adolescent Youth" in *Development of the High School Curriculum,* The Department of Superintendence, *Sixth Yearbook* (1928), 27.

[10] "Character Education in Adolescence; Vocational Guidance," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review,* 39 (1939), 586–592.

[11] "What Is the American Youth Problem?" *Annals* of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 194 (1937), 21–22.

[12] Richard D. Allen, *Organization and Supervision of Guidance in Public Education* (New York: INOR Group-Guidance Series, 1937), IV, Preface vii–ix.

[13] Msgr. John M. Cooper, in stressing the importance of individual guidance, suggests that in an efficiency rating scale for religious educators, it would not be unreasonable to credit them with about 50 points for perfect instruction in the classroom and about the same number for perfect guidance outside the classroom. He further states that "any teacher of religion who thinks of his task as exclusively a classroom and group one should be rated low as a religious educator, no matter how high is his rating on instruction alone." "The Preparation of Teachers of Religion," *Journal of Religious Instruction,* 10 (1939), 54–64.

lifework. We found that 64 per cent of the students had sought such guidance, 32.2 per cent had not, 3.1 per cent did not know whether they had or not, while .3 per cent failed to respond. It is significant that among the seniors, over 70 per cent say that they have sought this guidance, while this percentage is correspondingly lower among the lower classmen.

Now, if nearly two out of three have sought guidance, from what sources have they sought it? We can best summarize our findings on this question by presenting them in the following table.

TABLE 8. Sources From Which Adolescents Sought Guidance Regarding Their Future Lifework

Source	*Per cent*
1. Parents (one or both)	56.8
Both father and mother	28.0
Father only	15.8
Mother only	13.0
2. Teachers	16.2
3. A priest	13.8
4. Boy friends	12.0
5. Relatives	9.8
6. My brothers	6.6
7. My sisters	4.8
8. My girl friend	.5
9. God and prayer	.4
10. Other friends (employer, doctor, etc.)	13.0

From an inspection of Table 8, it is evident that the parents are by far the main source from which guidance has been sought. Thus, we see that the father has been consulted on the question of future vocation by 43.8 per cent of the boys while the mother by 41 per cent, with 28 per cent consulting both father and mother. These findings would seem to indicate that the home should be the mainstay in the guidance of the adolescent. A lacuna in our data at this point is that we have no check on the extent to which the guidance thus sought was satisfactory or helpful.

A word of explanation is necessary in interpreting the percentage of boys who mentioned their teacher as a source of vocational guidance. Since a number of the schools that cooperated in this study are staffed by priests either entirely or in part, it was difficult to judge whether those boys who indicated a priest as the source of their guidance had their teacher or their confessor in mind. So we simply listed all such answers under the classification "priest." Hence, a fair proportion of those who indicated a priest as the source of their vocational guidance should be interpreted as referring to a priest teacher. Thus, the number who consulted their teachers is actually larger than the above table would indicate.

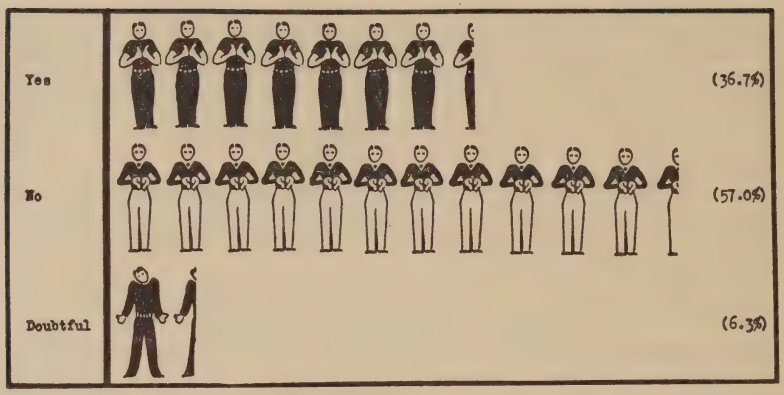

Figure 8. Do you have the opportunity to speak to your teachers about your personal problems? Each symbol represents the opinion of 5 per cent of the high-school population.

There is a tendency for more and more boys to approach their teachers, boy friends, "other friends," and father on the problem of their future vocation as they progress through the high school. This tendency is reversed, however, with respect to the number who indicate the "priest" as the one from whom they sought such guidance. In the case of the number who sought guidance from their teachers we note that almost twice as many seniors approached them as did freshmen or sophomores, 22.4 per cent as compared with 11.6 per cent.

Another point stands out from a comparison of the above data with figures quoted previously; namely, that while only 16.2 per cent affirmed that they had sought guidance from their teachers relative to their future lifework, 40 per cent stated that the school had helped them toward settling this problem. Thus it would seem that many pupils are helped in this problem indirectly, i.e., through general advice given in class; some of these, however, may have received help from a teacher who, on his own initiative, approached the boy on this matter.

Opportunity for Consultation With Teachers

So far we have quoted no direct evidence as to the extent to which the opportunity for boys to consult their teachers exists. Hence we inquired into this question, but worded the query so that it would include the extent to which the opportunity existed for consulting their teachers on any personal problem. Thus to the question, *Do you have the opportunity to speak to your teachers about your personal problems?* we find 36.7 per cent answering "Yes," 57 per cent answering "No," 5.9 per cent indicating that they did not know whether or not such opportunities existed, while .4 per cent left this question unanswered. (See Fig. 8.)

We followed up the above question with an inquiry into the extent to which this opportunity is made use of by those who have it, and found that fewer than half (46 per cent) actually make use of this opportunity of speaking to their teachers about their personal problems. This 46 per cent represents 16.8 per cent of the general high-school population, or in other words, at the present time only one out of every six boys in our high schools talks over his personal problems with one of his teachers.

Because of the similarity between the percentage of boys who talk over their problems with their teachers (16.8 per cent) and the percentage of those who stated that they sought vocational guidance from their teachers (16.2 per cent), it would seem that vocational problems are the main problems which boys take to their teachers. This interpretation is borne out by the results received on a further inquiry relative to whom the boys most frequently approach to get advice and talk over things that concern them intimately. Our findings show that only 2.6 per cent state that they most frequently go to their teachers to talk over their intimate problems.

Reasons Why Boys Do Not Consult Teachers

But if more than half of those who have the opportunity of consulting their teachers about their problems fail to make use of it, what is the reason for their failure to do so? Are the teachers at fault? Is their general manner too forbidding? Or, is it that the boys take their problems to others? We searched for the answers to these questions through a general question put to those who stated that they did not consult their teachers though they had the opportunity of doing so.

The answers received to this query are quite varied and distinctly personal, but most of them can be summed up under the headings in Table 9. First, however, we present a sampling of their comments to give the personal touch which is usually lost when the individual statements are summarized in tabular form.

I feel my teachers are not near enough to me.
I'm bashful about asking and besides I feel they don't know all about life themselves.
Because it would cause a change in their opinion of me.
Because I don't know how or where to begin.
I haven't got the time . . . don't want to stay after school.
I feel it does not concern them.
Our teachers here, at least most of them, laugh at me if I get serious.
I keep company with a boy and we iron out our troubles together.
I'm afraid and ashamed.
I think such problems should be discussed at home.
It takes time to wait until they are alone.
I just can't get up nerve enough to do it.
I think I can handle my own.
Seems selfish to take up their leisure time.

My teachers seem too impersonal, cold, and inhuman.
Don't like to consult a nun.
Have difficulty in expressing myself.
My difficulties aren't that serious.
They are not interested in me personally.
Would rather keep them to myself. I'd hate to have them know.
They would think I'm just trying to get a drag.

TABLE 9. Reasons Why Teachers Are Not Consulted on Personal Problems, Though Opportunity for Consultation Exists

Reason	*Per cent**
Don't have any problems that are that serious, don't think it necessary, can handle my own problems	19.2
Lack the nerve, afraid, too self-conscious, too bashful and shy, would be embarrassed	15.6
Don't care to, don't like to, don't want to	11.2
I consult someone else, would rather talk it over with someone else, prefer someone who knows me better	10.0
Lack the time for it, don't bother about it, don't get down to it, don't think about it, not interested	9.8
Would rather keep it to myself, rather keep it in the family, none of their business, don't want teacher to know my personal problems	7.7
Teachers would not understand me, don't know me well enough, don't think teacher could help me, they would not take me seriously	7.2
Teachers not interested in us, not friendly enough, not personal enough with me, too distant, don't want to bother them	7.0
No confidence in teacher, don't care for the teacher, have more confidence in someone else, fear he would tell it further	4.7
Fear teacher would get wrong impression of me, fear teacher would make fun of me, might cause him to think less of me, would think I'm trying to get a drag	3.5
Don't know, or no answer given	1.8
Miscellaneous	2.3

* Percentages based on 397 boys who have the opportunity to consult their teachers but do not use it.

It is only with caution that we might interpret how many of this 20 per cent, who do not make use of the opportunity of consulting their teachers though the opportunity does exist, would consult their teachers if their manner rendered them more approachable. But judging from the above reasons, it does seem that at least 38 per cent of these boys would make use of the opportunity if their teachers were more sympathetic and understanding, thus instilling confidence and rendering the approach more easy. But regardless of what changes might be made in the offering of personal guidance in our schools, apparently about one fourth of these boys would still prefer to keep their problems to themselves because they think "it should be kept in the family" or because they do not want to talk of such personal matters with their teachers. This number represents 4.5 per cent of the

high-school population, though this percentage might be greater if we knew how many of the 57 per cent, who stated that they did not have the opportunity of speaking with their teachers, felt the same way about this matter.

Now, looking at the question of guidance as a whole through the eyes of those on the receiving end, we note that 57 per cent of the boys have not even the opportunity of consulting their teachers and more than half of the 36 per cent, who do have the opportunity, fail to make use of it, while over one third of these latter indicate that they would do so if the manner of the teachers would be such as to evoke confidence.

Guidance, an Essential in the School Program

Perhaps the greatest obstacle to the improvement of guidance in our Catholic schools is the too prevalent attitude that it is one of the nonessentials in the school. That the opposite is true cannot be expressed more forcefully than by quoting that leader of youth, Father Lord:

> The priest and the religious teacher are natural and supernatural guides for youth. By virtue of their vocation they are the constituted guides of youth; to advise and help youth is one of the major duties of their state in life. Whether or not they will take up this work is not a matter of chance. The work is imposed on them by their vocation; it is part of their job. And if they fail to fulfill this duty, God Himself will one day hold them responsible . . . I find it hard to forgive the religious teacher who is too busy with Latin or literature or mathematics or science or history, too busy to remember that he or she has a prior obligation to be the guide of souls. The religious who is too busy with classroom material to watch for a chance to help young people with their personal problems might just as well take off the habit or the cassock and go teach in a school where soul guidance is not part of the normal duties. To teach a subject magnificently is to do only half the job. The religious teacher must guide the youth he teaches, must take an interest in the personal problems of his students.[14]

But as indicated by the boys' comments, recognition of this important duty is not enough; it must be exercised with a sympathetic understanding, an all-pervading kindness, and an almost infinite patience. For, as Father Lord states so well:

> The young person's approach to something really personal and important is all around the mulberry bush. The longest way home is the shortest way to his problem. There is a first approach, a windup, a preliminary shot or two, a running up to the hurdle and a shying away — all before the real subject is approached. . . . They are never sure of the reception that will be given their problem. So they bury really important things in a mass of distracting and harmless detail.[15]

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[14] Daniel A. Lord, S.J., *Some Notes on the Guidance of Youth* (St. Louis: The Queen's Work Press, 1938), 20–22.

[15] *Ibid.*, 36–37.

Furthermore, to be effective, "guidance must be delicately passive (suggestive) rather than forcefully active,"[16] for, as we shall have occasion to point out later, the adolescent feels that his acquiescence in the face of blunt direction and criticism would amount to a recognition of his inferiority. And rather than increase this uncertainty which he already feels, he almost instinctively puts on a blasé, cold, sophisticated, matter-of-fact exterior, very often for the sole purpose of securing his own sensitive feelings from being disturbed. Hence, while the guiding hand must be firm and forceful at times, it must be ever ready to lend a lighter touch when the occasion demands. Every adolescent being different, the teacher must adjust his approach to the individual as well as to the particular situation.

Perhaps no experience is more disheartening to the adolescent than that of being laughed at when he confidentially attempts to open his heart to his teacher. Though the number who complained of this is small, yet, because of the discouraging effect which such conduct has upon the boy, we draw particular attention to it here. It is best to treat as serious what the adolescent considers as serious, for treating his difficulty in a light vein will only serve to convince him that "the teacher simply can't understand me."

Confidence in Teachers

We suspected that many boys failed to consult their teachers about personal difficulties because they feared that their confidence would be betrayed. We asked this question directly, *Do you think your teachers would betray your confidence if you spoke to them about such personal matters?* but found only 10.2 per cent of the general high-school population stating that they thought their teachers would betray their confidence if they spoke to them about personal matters. Eight out of ten frankly stated that they had no such fears, while a tenth were doubtful. Thus, we see that, in so far as our study is representative of the general run of teachers found in our Catholic high schools, by far the majority have the confidence of the boys on this point. A contributing factor to this rather high estimate of the teacher's ability to keep a confidence may well be the modern boy's remarkable frankness and the apparent unconcern of many as to who among their teachers might learn of their problems.

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[16] Douglas A. Thom, *Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1932), 12.

Chapter 8

PROBLEMS IN THE TEACHER-PUPIL RELATIONSHIP

Of all the influences in the school that of teacher upon pupil is the strongest. It is the vibrant contact of personality with personality which stimulates in the adolescent the deepest reactions, either positive, attracting him toward the good, or negative, repelling him from all for which the teacher stands. King points out how the influence of the teacher (both positive and negative) is dwelt upon and emphasized to such an extent as practically to eclipse every other single force, and in many cases, all other forces combined.[1]

Playing Favorites

Because of the sensitiveness with which the adolescent reacts to personal influence, and because of the subtle potency of personality reacting upon personality, an insight into the boy's reactions toward his teachers as revealed to us by the boy himself should give us first a cue as to the extent and gravity of his problems in this phase of his school life and, second, some indication as to the effectiveness of his teacher's efforts. A teacher exerts a good influence on his pupils only in proportion to the amount of respect and admiration they have for him. If the boy fears his teacher, feels that he is unfair, that he plays favorites, the reaction on the part of the boy will hardly be anything but that of repulsion. With these facts in mind, we placed a number of questions designed to elicit the boy's reactions to certain phases in the teacher-pupil relationship about which the adolescent feels quite strongly.

The Adolescent Detests Unfairness

One of the points on which the teen-age boy is deeply sensitive is unfair treatment. As Pringle affirms, "if not perverted, the adolescent naturally has a passion for justice and is impatient with anything that suggests artificial distinctions or unearned honors."[2] Square dealing is part of the code of adolescence[3] and any semblance of unjust treatment, either real or imagined, rankles in his mind and heart, severing

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[1] King, *The High School Age* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1914), 143.

[2] Pringle, *Adolescence and High School Problems* (New York: D. C. Heath and Co., 1922), 365.

[3] W. S. and L. K. Sadler, *Piloting Modern Youth* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1931), 223.

every trace of respect and admiration he may have previously held for his teacher.

A recent investigator sums up his findings on this point thus: "Nothing is demanded by students so often, so unanimously and with such emphasis as this: that the teacher be just. . . . Desires for a just teacher are expressed so frequently that even experienced teachers are astonished. . . . Practically all of them demand of the teacher that he show no partiality. . . . We can conclude with certainty that students are particularly sensitive on this point, even considerably more sensitive than we are inclined to assume."[4]

It is not surprising, then, that even a teacher with superior knowledge and extraordinary skill can nullify his efforts by the least show of partiality. In inquiring into this problem, we first put the question, *Do you feel your teachers treat you fairly?* and then to get the boy's summary judgment on *all* his teachers, we asked him whether he would agree that *all* his teachers were fair.

To the first question, nearly two thirds (65.9 per cent) of the boys answered "yes frequently," indicating that they felt their teachers treated them fairly; only 116 (5.8 per cent) felt that they were "rarely" treated in this manner. Somewhat over one fourth (27.9 per cent), however, felt that they were "occasionally" treated unfairly. Thus, one third of the boys in this study state that they experience unfair treatment at the hands of their teachers at least once in a while, though only one out of 17 experience such treatment almost regularly.

Now when we consider the second phase of the question, the extent to which the boy judges *all* his teachers as fair, we find only 48 per cent willing to agree that *all* can be so classified. While the above question shows us the extent to which the adolescent feels that he is treated fairly by most of his teachers, this second phase of the question points out to us both the extent to which the boy feels he is given a square deal by *all* of his teachers, and the extent to which other students are treated fairly as well. Our results seem to indicate that when the adolescent is asked to appraise *all* his teachers on the quality of fairness, practically one out of every two finds it impossible to agree that all of his teachers qualify as fair.

Closely allied to the problem of unfairness is that of favoritism. Hence we asked the boy if he would agree that none of his teachers had "pets," and found that only 31.7 per cent were willing to agree. This means that over two thirds of the boys feel that one or more of their teachers is guilty of showing favoritism. That the boys, be they freshmen or seniors, see through such frivolous conduct is evident not only in the results just quoted but in the frequency of their comments as well.

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[4] M. Keilhacker, *Der ideale Lehrer nach der Auffassung der Schueler* (Freiburg: Herder, 1932), 60–61.

The following sampling of the many comments that were added on this matter indicates how deeply the boy feels about the teacher's having "pets."

I believe that for teachers to have "pets" is very unfair, not only to that particular boy but to the rest of the students.

They just pay attention to their "pets" and don't even know you are in class.

Why do you have to be a "pet" to make the team or be chosen for the show?

I honestly believe that the teachers here at —— show too much preference for some boys.

Some (women) are inclined to show their motherly love and have "pets."

My teachers show too much favoritism! And mostly for the well-to-do boys.

The teachers here treat the girls better than the boys.

No "pets" — ha! ha! — what a joke!

Some teachers only pay attention to the boys they like best.

They don't give a darn about us — they got their pets to satisfy themselves.

Some teachers like smart boys and football players better, and the hell with the rest!

The tone of these comments speaks volumes in condemnation of the teacher who shows favoritism. If anything, contact with such teachers, instead of helping the adolescent to see through himself, merely serves to arouse hate and further complicates his emotional difficulties.

Unreasonable Homework Demands

We now pass to a consideration of the adolescent's attitude toward the homework assigned by the teachers. It is readily admitted that the figures we are about to give do not represent an objective judgment of the homework problem. They do, however, represent the adolescent's subjective reaction to the homework demands in our Catholic high schools today. That the adolescent is wrong in some of his views on the homework situation is quite evident; that he is correct in some of his views is equally evident.

In summing up the replies received to the question, *Do you feel your teachers are reasonable in their demand for homework?* we find 39.6 per cent agreeing that the teacher's demands in this matter are reasonable; 36.4 per cent state that this is true only "occasionally," while 23.8 per cent feel that this is "rarely" true. Four individuals failed to respond. Therefore, about one fourth of the students feel that their teachers regularly demand an "unreasonable" amount of homework from them. But, when we consider those who experience these "excessive" demands less frequently, though "occasionally," the proportion jumps up to six out of ten.

That the boys regard this as one of their problems which they would like to have remedied is best brought out by a few typical comments.

I think too much homework is given. When I get home I sit right down and start in from 4:00 to 5:30. I continue then after supper 6:00 to 7:30 which includes only written work — 5 hours of school, 3 hours of written homework. If I want to play football I'm up to about 10:00 working, since I cannot think fast when tired. — *From a student who signs himself, "sincerely yours, an overworked sophomore."*

Too much homework. It is just like a man working overtime without getting paid for it. — *From a junior.*

I think homework should be abolished because personally I think that little benefit is derived from it and it only incurs the ill will of the student. — *From a senior.*

I take school seriously and get excellent marks and find that I am under a terrible strain, for I have only two or three hours a day for anything but schoolwork. All week I can think of nothing but school. — *From a senior.*

Lest the reader get the impression that the only comments received were of the nature of a complaint, we present the following which is indicative of a boy well adjusted in his school life.

I like to go to this high school because here the teachers listen and appreciate what you tell them and they try to help you as much as they can. The studies are taught as they should be. And the courses are usually all right. While homework requirements are stiff, they are not unreasonable. Sports are encouraged by the teachers and they do all in their power to help you succeed.

Another says,

I think that a lot of boys who complain about the school and their teachers are themselves to blame. They just imagine things are tough.

It is true, very few boys of this type elected to express their satisfaction in writing. But this does not mean that only a small number are well adjusted. As a matter of fact, our figures indicate that the majority of students, by and large, are fairly well satisfied.

"Getting Along" With Teachers

The response received to the question, *Do you get along well with your teachers?* bears out this point in the matter of the boy's relations in this phase of his school life. The large majority (69.9 per cent) affirm that they get along well with their teachers, while an additional 26.4 per cent state that they get along well "occasionally." For some (3.7 per cent), however, relations with their teachers serve merely as a point of departure for further difficulties, for they state that they rarely, if ever, get along well with them.

By way of explanation, some add that they think "the teachers are too narrow minded and don't give us credit for having a brain of our own"; that "because I do not have talent they think I am indifferent and lazy"; and that "I could get along if I went out for a 'pull' but I despise such tactics." Then there are some who complain that "my teachers try to show their authority too much"; that "some try to act as 'big shots' but we know they are not"; that "they try to make

a naturally joyous boy quiet and orderly." One adds the interesting comment, "Some teachers in our school are not chosen to fit the boys because some are too old. They should get younger teachers because they understand the boys better."

Though the number thus ill adjusted to their teachers is gratifyingly small, yet the number who can "get along" with their teachers only occasionally is quite large — more than one out of four. We are not prepared to identify the underlying causes for this lack of adjustment, but it does not seem far from the truth to state that in some instances, it may be nothing more than a clash of personalities.

But the teacher is not always free from blame. In one school which cooperated in this study, fully half of the boys complained vigorously about a certain "bald-headed old teacher who is too old to teach." They go on to complain: "He is childish and we would be better off without him — ought to be put in an insane asylum — is overstrict and unfair in marking — makes us sit up straight and perfectly still with no hands in pockets, no pencil on desk," etc. An example of how one disliked teacher can antagonize an entire student body!

Fear Versus Love and Reverence

While inability to "get along" with a teacher tends to kill a boy's interest in his schoolwork and render his school life all the more difficult, excessive fear of a teacher tends to stifle those finer impulses which make for easy adjustments and a happy school life. In an attempt to find out to what extent such a fear functions in the lives of our adolescents we put the question, *Do you "fear" some of your teachers, rather than "love" and "revere" them?*

Almost two out of three (62.7 per cent) indicate that they love and revere their teachers rather than fear them. With 28.9 per cent, however, the response is just the opposite, though, as is evident from the wording of the question, their reply only refers to "some of their teachers." Eight per cent replied that they "didn't know," while .4 per cent failed to reply.

In comparing the four groups within the school, we find the number who fear some of their teachers quite evenly divided. Hence, there is no ground for the assumption that the majority of these might be freshmen who are coming into contact with high-school teachers for the first time. Though the number who fear their teachers rather than love and revere them is more than one out of four, still, the attitude of the majority of boys to their teachers is one that inspires confidence and renders the adolescent receptive for effective teaching.

An important point here for teachers to remember is that boys expect a certain amount of "chumminess" in their teachers. As Prescott points out, "Teachers are not merely the machines by which educative experiences are made available to children. They are part of the active environment of the child. Children desire affection from them, status

with them, and recognition by them."[5] But the wise teacher will know where to draw the line; he will never relinquish the role of guide for that of "pal" — a role he can never adequately fill.

We now turn our attention to a consideration of two points in the teacher-pupil relationship which the adolescent feels are quite important; namely, the extent to which his teachers take an active interest in him, and secondly, the extent to which his teachers show themselves helpful to him.

Teachers' Interest in Pupils

In summarizing the replies to the question, *Do you feel all of your teachers are interested in you and your work?* we find that while the majority (59.5 per cent) manifest a desirable reaction by answering "Yes," a relatively large number, 616 (30.8 per cent), show an undesirable reaction in answering "No." Almost one tenth (9.2 per cent) were unable to decide whether their teachers were interested in them or not.

Some of those who answered "No" not only emphasized their reply by heavily encircling their answer but added that "Teachers don't pay any attention to you," "They don't take enough interest in my affairs," etc. One added the thought-provoking comment, "They don't take an interest in me because they just take teaching with a resigned attitude."

Outside of the feeling of being misunderstood, nothing is more disheartening to the boy, nor more of a blight on his youthful enthusiasm, than a realization that his teachers are not interested either in him or his work. And the fact that 31 out of 100 do not feel that all of their teachers are interested in them is ample reason for all teachers to take stock of their customary dealings with their students. The wording of this question, however, does not permit us to say how many of these students feel that none of their teachers are interested in them.

If the adolescent's realization that his teachers are not interested in him is a shock to his youthful idealism, it is because he feels that he has caught a glimpse of the worth-whileness of himself and the high purposes for which he is striving, and hence, expects a like appreciation in those who are, by profession, supposed to help him attain to the fullest realization of his being. Failure on the part of the teachers to come up to his expectations stimulates a reaction of disappointment and depression.

The adolescent wants older people to be interested in him and what he is doing, but above all he expects such an active interest from his teachers. He takes it for granted that they should be interested in him. He likewise takes it for granted that the teachers should be helpful to him, for in the back of his mind, a willingness to help him is a

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[5] Daniel A. Prescott, *Emotion and the Educative Process* (Washington, D. C.: The American Council of Education, 1938), 280.

natural concomitant of an interest in him. But when this expected help is not forthcoming, or, at least not to the extent which he has anticipated, his idealism and particularly his enthusiasm receive another jolt. It was for the purpose of seeing to what extent the adolescent experiences such reactions that we asked the question, *Do you feel some of your teachers could be more helpful than they are?*

Teachers Could Be More Helpful

By way of response to the above question, 68 per cent answered "Yes," 24.8 per cent "No," 6.8 per cent "Doubtful." The remaining .4 per cent left the question blank. In other words, only one out of every four boys is satisfied that all of his teachers are as helpful as they could be, while more than two out of every three feel that at least some of their teachers could be more helpful than they are. Perhaps an objective analysis of this problem would reveal that some of this desire for more helpfulness is the result of a kind of intellectual laziness. However, we are primarily interested in learning the boy's point of view.

Comments appended to this question give some idea as to what some boys expect by way of more helpfulness. Some ask for "more personal help and individual attention," for "more of an interest in me personally," for "some practical subjects and no Latin." Others complain of a teacher's inability to teach because "he teaches too fast — before you know one thing he starts something new"; that "teachers are so highly educated they cannot understand why you are so dumb"; that "they take too much for granted"; that "they just teach to be doing something; they don't give a darn"; that "they expect too much from one without ability." Another adds, "I think my teacher is really smart, he knows a lot, but he can't teach it. In this subject I am learning nothing." A freshman complains, "Some of my teachers, especially the one in algebra, will give you work on stuff you've never had before and then only the next day explain it."

A few feel that their teachers could be of more assistance if they would adopt a more helpful attitude, for "some teachers have the air that they are out to 'get' you. They should want to help you." Still others add, "If our teachers realized what we are going through they would act differently."

A consideration of the tone of these comments, together with the above figures, gives ample evidence that the boy prizes highly the quality of helpfulness in his teachers. Our findings are strengthened by those of F. W. Hart, who, in asking 10,000 high-school seniors to describe their best-liked and least-liked teachers, found that teachers were best liked because of their helpfulness, while a lack of helpfulness was the reason second in frequency of mention for rejecting a teacher.[6]

[6] F. W. Hart, *Teachers and Teaching* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1934), 131, 250.

The replies to the questions on helpfulness and interest bear further significance when we compare the four groups within the high school. In Figure 9 a definite trend is shown for more and more boys to become dissatisfied with their teachers on these two points as they progress through the high school. Since the biggest jump in this trend occurs between the freshmen and sophomore years, it would seem that the

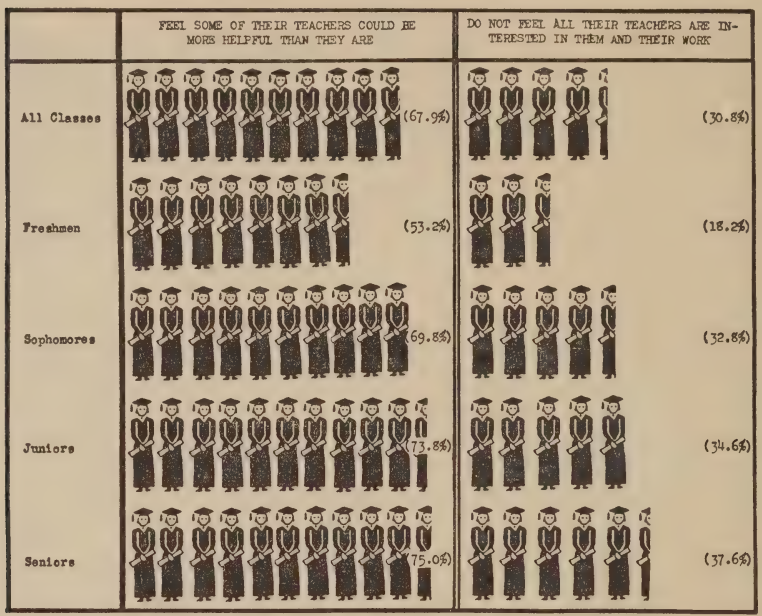

Figure 9. Extent of dissatisfaction with teachers in the matter of helpfulness and interest. Each symbol represents the opinion of 7 per cent of the boys in each respective group.

idealism with which some of the boys regarded their teachers and the expectations they had of them when they entered high school have not been fulfilled by subsequent experience, and hence have met with a certain amount of disillusionment.

We have noted at various points, this tendency for the upperclassmen rather than the underclassmen to be less satisfied with the school and its offerings. It would seem that this is partly explained by the fact that as the student approaches closer to graduation, he becomes more demanding in what he wants from the school and more critical of how it is given. Perhaps this is because he is coming to realize more and more the necessity of being prepared for the responsibilities that lie ahead.

Boys' Judgment of Qualities in Their Teachers

We desired to get a comprehensive judgment from the boy covering all his teachers with regard to certain qualities which are deemed rather essential in a teacher. Therefore we presented him with a series of such qualities and asked him to check those which he felt were present in all of his teachers. This information is helpful in our present study, since the qualities presented are such that the absence of them tends to complicate and render more difficult the adjustments which the adolescent has to make in his social life. In Table 10 we present the percentages of boys who checked each of these qualities.

TABLE 10. Boys' Summary Judgment of Teachers on Certain Qualities

Percentage of boys who feel all of their teachers:					
Are intelligent	66.2	†*	Are kind	42.6	–
Have ability to teach	62.3	0	Have good discipline	41.0	0
Are friendly	55.6	†	Are interested in me	36.4	0
Have a sense of humor	48.2	0	Are even tempered	34.1	0
Are fair	48.0	0	Are understanding	32.9	–
Are helpful	45.5	0	Have no pets	31.7	–
Are patient	43.8	0			

* † Indicates regular trend for more and more boys to check this quality as they advance through the school.
– Indicates the opposite trend.
0 Indicates no definite trend either way.

The relatively low percentage of boys who checked certain of these qualities, as for example, the low number who felt that none of their teachers had "pets," is none too flattering an appraisal of the teachers in our Catholic high schools. One thing is certain, adolescents weigh their teachers in an exacting balance; for that matter, anyone whom they feel should command their esteem receives the same critical appraisal. Of course, these figures are not an objective appraisal, but what makes them almost as important as if they were, is the fact that these figures represent the extent to which the adolescent thinks these qualities are present or not present in his teachers. And in our study it is primarily his reactions to which we are looking. For it is the reactions stimulated within him that either alleviate and render easy, or complicate and make more difficult, the adjustments he has to make in the solution of his problems.

No doubt the figures would be much more complimentary had we asked the boy to check the extent these qualities were present in some of his teachers, but our purpose was to see to what extent he experienced the absence of one or more of these qualities in one or

more of his teachers. The average boy found about half of these qualities missing in at least some of his teachers; 8.2 per cent of the boys, most of whom were underclassmen, however, found all of their teachers possessing all of these qualities, thus indicating practically perfect satisfaction with their teachers. For these youths, other difficulties are likewise minimized by the very fact of such satisfactory teacher relations.

The "Crush" Phenomenon in the Adolescent Boy

During the period of adolescence, some boys experience such an absorbing affection for a teacher or older person that they constantly desire to be in this person's presence and at the same time feel a strong desire to give external expression to this affection. This phenomenon is popularly known as a "crush" and is a kind of overdeveloped emotional attachment which springs from an honest admiration for certain qualities which are seen in one esteemed. Many times the teacher or older person becomes for the adolescent the projection of his ideal, though the teacher actually may fall far short of what the boy imagines him to be. But because he may possess a few traits which the boy admires very much and which are prominent in his ideal, the adolescent places him on a pedestal and invests him with a halo.

The appearance of this phenomenon at this period, and especially during early adolescence, is easily understood when we recall the psychological changes the boy is experiencing at this time. His various powers, rapidly expanding, bring forth a new consciousness of the self, which in turn gives birth to a new feeling of isolation. And this feeling of being a "person apart," together with the natural restlessness of the period, drives the adolescent to seek out more intimate friendships as an escape from this isolation.

As Kempf has put it, the adolescent at this time has three principal needs: the need of a friend of the same age, to understand him; an older guide, to inspire and lead him; a person of the other sex, to love.[7] But because of the teacher's greater experience and maturity and because of the adolescent's sensitive response to idealistic qualities, the teacher may well surpass these others in commanding his affections. The very promise of having a sympathetic, understanding, and encouraging person as his inspiration and confidential guide fills the boy's deepest felt need, and we have a "crush" on the way. It is perhaps this desire for such a kindly person as a close friend that is the principal basis for the "crush" phenomenon. Now let the "haloed" teacher show a personal interest in him. Immediately he senses a resurgence of self-confidence. He feels understood. He feels safe, secure.

[7] Joseph G. Kempf, "Gladys Has a Crush on Sister," *The Catholic School Journal* (1935), 85–87.

His affection reaches out with even greater fervor. And we have a "crush" in full bloom.

Treated by the wise teacher, who takes an objective, unemotional, yet sympathetic and understanding attitude toward the adolescent thus overwrought, the "crush" passes off in a few weeks; but where such a flattering attention is encouraged, some of the gravest of the adolescent's problems may follow. Because of the interference of the "crush" with psychological weaning,[8] its hindrance in the training of the will, its tendency to call forth partiality on the part of the teacher, and because of the havoc wrought in the youthful soul when he is disillusioned, we thought it pertinent to this study to see to what extent this phenomenon functions in the life of the adolescent boy. Accordingly we asked the question, *Since the eighth grade, have you ever had a "crush" on (fallen in love with) a teacher or older person?* It will be noted that the wording of our question excludes any "crush" experienced previous to the boy's entrance into high school.

We find that almost one out of six (15.8 per cent) admits having had this experience since the eighth grade, while more than a third of these, or 6 per cent of all boys, say that they have "frequently" gone through the experience of a "crush" since the eighth grade; the other 9.8 per cent admit that they "occasionally" have had such an experience while in high school. But the large majority of boys (83.4 per cent) state that they have "rarely" had a "crush" during these years. In many cases the boys were not satisfied with encircling "rarely" but crossed it out and wrote in "never."

Perhaps a reason for the number who admit having had a "crush" being rather low is that once having outgrown such an experience the boy looks back on such a display of affection as a "lot of silliness." The fact that fewer upperclassmen than freshmen admitted having had such an experience seems to offer some proof for this statement.

At all events, it is apparent that adolescent boys do not experience "crushes" to the extent that girls do, for a recent investigator of this problem among adolescent girls found that over half of the girls admitted having had a "crush," though it is true that their experience of this phenomenon was not limited to their high-school period.[9]

With one out of six boys encountering this problem during his high-school years, it would seem worthy of the teacher's best efforts to be on his guard when this phenomenon makes its appearance, less he stir up a conflagration by unwisely returning the boy's affection. On the other hand, it would be equally wrong brutally to crush it. By taking a sympathetic yet matter-of-fact attitude, the teacher can wisely direct the adolescent toward utilizing this tendency in bringing

[8] *Ibid.*, 86.

[9] Sister Mildred Knoebber, O.S.B., *The Self-Revelation of the Adolescent Girl*, 98.

him closer to the heroes of the Church, the saints. Let the teacher "stay on the pedestal and polish the halo," for he must remember that the adolescent picks him out not for his actual qualities, but rather for the virtues with which he invests him.[10]

Being Misunderstood by Teachers

Thus far we have steered clear of treating what appears to be the adolescent's most disconcerting problem in his school life; namely, a feeling of not being understood, or of being misunderstood by his teachers. This problem has bobbed up in his comments on previous questions, but at this point we shall present the extent to which the boy experiences this problem, and then the reasons why, in his opinion, some teachers misunderstand boys.

We put the question in this way: *Do you think all of your teachers understand your difficulties?* To this 450 boys (22.5 per cent) answered "Yes"; 162 (8.1 per cent) indicated that they "didn't know," and a few failed to respond but over two thirds of the boys, 1380 (69 per cent) answered "No."

An observation not to be missed at this point is that the number who feel that their difficulties are not understood increases with the number of years spent in high school. Thus we find 42 per cent more seniors than freshmen stating that they do not feel all of their teachers understand their difficulties.

While it is interesting to learn from the adolescent himself the extent to which he feels he meets with this problem, it is decidedly more helpful to learn from him what he thinks the reasons are for some teachers misunderstanding boys; hence we asked for his reasons.

Why Teachers Misunderstand Boys

To the question, *What do you think is the reason why some teachers misunderstand boys?* the majority of boys responded wholeheartedly, some even appending the remark, "It makes me feel good to get these reasons off my chest"; while others added, "I sure hope this does some good." The tone of many replies was definitely that of "thanks for the opportunity."

So individual and varied were some of the reasons, that the writer felt hard put at times in attempting to telescope the responses under any reasonable number of headings. The following are the reasons advanced by the 1380 who answered "No" to the question, *Do you think all of your teachers understand your difficulties?*

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[10] Joseph Kempf, *op. cit.*, 87.

TABLE 11. Reasons Why Teachers Misunderstand Boys as Given by 1380 Boys Who Feel Misunderstood by Some of Their Teachers

Reason	*Frequency of mention*
Teachers don't know or understand boys well enough; don't know enough about his private life, how he feels, thinks, his way of doing things	155
Don't know boy's home life, conditions, troubles; don't understand his difficulties and problems; don't know the boy's outside duties	141
It's the boy's own fault; he is indifferent, gives wrong impression by showing off, fools around, is stubborn; is moody, changeable, acts queerly	139
Some teachers don't try to understand us; they are not interested in us	92
The big difference between the teacher's and the boy's thinking, mental levels, ideas, viewpoints, feelings, age; they lead different lives; teachers too holy; of a different character	91
Teachers do not realize our intellectual limitations; expect too much of us, think all have to be like the smartest	90
Boy does not confide enough in his teachers; doesn't tell them his difficulties, not frank enough, doesn't tell details, too shy	88
Teachers cling to a wrong first impression; snap judgments; prejudiced, believe gossip, imagine things about boys, jump to conclusions too fast; boy does wrong once and it is held against him ever after	70
Do not know boy's life outside of school, judge from what they see of him in school, only know him as a student — not as a man, don't look upon a boy as a human being	68
Times have changed and so have the boys; teachers never had to face the difficulties we have to face; teachers forget about when they were young	58
Don't mix enough with the boys, don't take time to know the boy, not enough personal contact, not enough heart-to-heart talk, don't make enough effort to get acquainted with the boy	56
Teachers are too old fashioned, they don't get around enough, want us to do as they did	51
They were never boys themselves, are used to girls and don't understand us, compare us with girls	47
Too many in the class for the teacher to know each boy well, too many different types, teacher is too busy	43
Don't understand that a boy likes fun, don't realize a boy has other interests besides study, don't know his likes, dislikes, interests	42
They don't care, they only pay attention to their pets	39
Teacher's fault: is inexperienced with boys, is stubborn, too authoritative and boys rebel, too wrapped up in his teaching, not made to be a teacher	39
Teachers do not see boy's point of view nor his side of the story, cannot put themselves in the boy's place	34
They don't like boys	29
They think all boys are alike, forget that some are different, some slower than others	20

TABLE 11. (Cont.)

Reason	*Frequency of mention*
Don't give the boy a chance to show what he is, won't listen to him, don't take boy seriously	17
Boy has difficulty in expressing himself, in getting across what he means	11
Miscellaneous	26
Don't know	57

Striking in the above data is the large number of students who feel that the teacher does not know the boy well enough to understand his difficulties. Rather striking, too, is the number who bluntly say that "Some teachers don't try to understand; they are not interested in us." However, one sixth admit that the boy himself is at fault, either because of his peculiar conduct, or because he does not confide enough in his teachers. Still, where one boy admits that boys themselves are to blame, there are more than four who put the blame on the teacher; of course, we must remember that this is the boy's opinion. Though undoubtedly sincere in laying the blame for being misunderstood on the shoulders of the teacher, in many a case the boy himself may be partially to blame. But again, what we are particularly interested in is the boy's side of the story.

About one boy in eight places the blame neither on himself nor on the teachers, but on certain circumstances, for example, the natural difference in points of view between the teacher and the boy, the fact that there are too many in the class, or the fact that some of the teachers are women and hence never had to face the problems of a boy.

Because the boy's remarks lose a certain amount of personal color when they are boiled down into tabular form, we present a cross section of the reasons given why some teachers misunderstand boys:

They misunderstand us because they stick to the old way they were brought up under.

Teachers don't know the boy well enough — don't know what he thinks.

Because we are too timid to tell them what is bothering us.

Most boys like to show off and women do not realize this.

Teachers live in their own world and forget that they were once young.

Because they don't analyze the boy's ambitions, conditions, circumstances, etc.

Teachers never come close enough to the boy to know his difficulties and problems.

They are too much interested in someone else they like.

Don't realize we are still at the "silly age."

Women don't know the temptations a boy has to cope with outside.

Some consider a boy more intelligent than he is.

They are always cooped up, never get around and therefore don't realize the life I have to live.
Boy's fault: doesn't give teachers a chance to understand him.
Judge by their own boyhood, but times are different today.
Because they are not able to get their minds down to the boy's level.
They don't try to understand; they try to be "hard boiled."
Are too busy to delve into each boy's problems.
They have so many that they just catalogue a boy into a certain class.
Don't know the conditions in which I am living.
Some are too darn holy.
Some don't give a damn.
Teachers don't understand because of a lack of confidence on the part of the boy.
Teachers have religious, cloistered views; boys have worldly views.
They judge boys just from what they see of them in school and there is a great difference between the boy in the classroom and what he is on the outside.
They do not know enough about my personal life and intimate difficulties.

Scarcely anyone can read the above opinions, colored as they are with the boy's personal feelings, without realizing that the feeling of being misunderstood calls forth deeply sensitive reactions within the adolescent. But the question may be raised as to why the problem of being misunderstood is one of the adolescent's most disheartening experiences.

To understand this, we must recall that what we are here considering is basically the reaction of a personality to a personality. And as stated earlier, there is no influence so dynamic, so subtle, so capable of eliciting a deep, soul-stirring response in the supersensitive adolescent as that exerted by a person who enjoys the adolescent's esteem. Most teachers, because of their superior knowledge and greater experience and maturity, fit into this category. Hence, the depth of reaction and frustration that takes place in the adolescent's soul when the realization of not being understood by his teacher dawns upon him.

But why is the adolescent boy so sensitive on this point? It is because he feels the need of being understood more keenly than he has ever felt it before. And this because his heightened self-consciousness has made him extremely conscious of, and sensitive to, his many difficulties and problems of the period. This heightened self-consciousness, resulting from the comparatively sudden expansion of his powers, is becoming a double-edged sword for him. It is rendering his whole being hypersensitive to the personal influences in his environment, thus causing him to be preoccupied with the impression he is making on others, at the same time magnifying his own difficulties into a role of unwonted importance. Thus, feelings of uncertainty and insecurity, a hypersensitiveness to the opinions of others, and an increased number of problems of adjustment combine to render more acute any lack of sympathetic understanding on the part of those from whom he feels he has a right to expect this understanding; and the higher the individual

is in the adolescent's estimation, the deeper and the more devastating the reaction within his inner consciousness.

Summary

Looking back over the main facts considered in the present chapter, we recall that slightly over half of the students feel that not all their teachers are fair, and that two out of three think that one or more of their teachers have pets, although only one out of three claims to be personally treated at times unfairly. Sixty per cent of the boys feel that teachers are not always reasonable in their homework demands, and 69 per cent say that not all their teachers understand the boy's difficulties. Three out of ten feel that not all their teachers are interested in them and their work, while nearly seven out of ten think that some of their teachers could be more helpful than they are. Only one out of six admits having experienced a crush during his high-school years. Nearly three out of ten fear their teachers rather than love and revere them, but, by and large, the teacher-pupil relationship balances on the favorable side for seven out of ten say that as a general rule they get along well with their teachers.

Chapter 9

PROBLEMS OF THE ADOLESCENT IN HIS STUDIES

There can be little doubt that a boy's relations with his teachers constitute one of the principal factors which determine the attitude he takes toward his studies, his success in them, how much he gets out of his school training, and whether his school life is happy or not. It is because these relations and their subsequent reactions play such a major role in the boy's school life that we examined in some detail the incidence of problems lying along various points of contact in this vital relationship.

School Life Happy

In the present chapter we shall examine the boy's general reaction to his studies and to his school life at large. In inquiring into these two phases of the boy's life at school, we put the questions, *When thoughts of your studies occur to you, do happy or unhappy thoughts "usually" come to mind?* and *Is your school life happy?* We asked the boy to answer the former question by encircling one of the four following words: *happy, unhappy, both, neither.* The percentage of boys encircling each follows: *both,* 51.7 per cent; *unhappy,* 24.8 per cent; *happy,* 11.5 per cent; *neither,* 11.5 per cent. Ten boys skipped the question. Therefore, for slightly over half of the boys, the reactions they experience when thoughts of studies come to mind depend on circumstances, their mood, and the nature of their studies. One out of four, though, usually experiences an unhappy reaction when studies are suggested, which means that for these lads, here lies a problem which is a complicating cause for many another difficulty. On the other hand, we have roughly one out of ten who is so taken up with his studies, whose school life is so well adjusted, that such thoughts usually prompt a happy reaction.

To our second question, *Is your school life happy?* we find almost two thirds of the boys (65.1 per cent) answering with an unqualified "Yes," indicating that their life at school is happy. An additional 26.4 per cent say that their school life is "occasionally" happy. Therefore, if we do not count the 1.5 per cent who failed to respond, we are left with only 140 boys (7 per cent) who definitely do not find their school life happy. For these 140 boys, school life would seem to be drudgery, a weight on their life, a source of depression. But they are not alone in these experiences. More than 25 per cent of the

students go through such experiences more or less often. Hence, high school is, at least occasionally, a source of problems for one third of the boys. The extent to which this one third could be better adjusted in their school life, through improved guidance facilities, a reorganized curriculum with more attention to individual differences, and more sympathetic understanding on the part of teachers, is a matter of conjecture. But that better adjustment could be effected there is no doubt.

Reasons for Going to School

On the face of the matter one would expect some relation between happiness in school and the boy's desire to go to school. At the same time, it would be interesting to find out what percentage of our Catholic high-school boys are being forced to go to school, either by their parents or because of school laws or the boy's inability to get a job. Hence we asked the boy to indicate if he was going to school because (1) both he and his parents desired it, or (2) someone was making him go, or (3) he desired to go.

We note rather gratifyingly that nine out of ten of these boys are in school because they desire to go to school, while over half of them (52.8 per cent) state that their parents likewise join them in this desire. This, too, is gratifying, for when parents back up their son in his desire to go to school, we can look forward to cooperation from the home while the boy can rely on their heartening encouragement. Outside of the four individuals who left this question blank, the remaining 9.1 per cent state, "someone is making me go." Whether a white-collar tradition, or socioeconomic reasons lie behind the pressure this "someone" is exerting, we have no means of telling; but the fact is, that almost one out of every ten boys in our Catholic high schools is there because someone is making him go. The problems that often follow such cases are only too well known and need no elaboration here.

But going back over the above figures, we note that over one third of the boys (37.9 per cent) failed to mention that their parents also desired them to go to school. It would be an unfounded assumption to conclude that their parents are opposed to their going to school; but, considering the instructions the boys were given in answering this question, it does not seem to be going beyond our findings to conclude that the parents of these boys are none too enthusiastic about their son's attendance at school.

Parental Attitude and the Boy's Studies

To what extent does this parental attitude function in the matter of the boy's studies? Every boy has a right to expect encouragement from his parents in his schoolwork. To what extent do our boys find this encouragement? To discover the answer to this question we

asked the boys, *Do your parents encourage you and "pep" you up in your schoolwork?*

In response to this query, over two thirds (67.6 per cent) of the students answered "Yes, frequently." Almost one fourth (23 per cent) of the boys, however, indicated that they received encouragement from their parents in their schoolwork "occasionally."

A point worth noting is that the number who say that their parents encourage them in their studies is highest in the freshman year and then falls steadily through the remaining three years. Thus it would seem that either some of the parents gradually lose interest in the boy's schoolwork as he progresses through high school or that they feel that he does not need such encouragement after he has completed his first year.

Nearly one tenth (9.3 per cent) say that they "rarely," if ever, receive such encouragement or "pepping up" from their parents. Quite a number of these, in an effort to make themselves clear, went to the trouble of striking out "Rarely" and wrote in "Never." It can hardly be doubted that those who miss this mark of parental interest experience added difficulties from time to time in trying to keep up their own scholastic interests. It is interesting to note that Reavis, in his experience with the maladjusted, found that many of these poorly adjusted students had become so through the influence of detrimental attitudes on the part of parents and that when cooperation of the parents was obtained, the prospect of failure in schoolwork was completely eliminated.[1]

If the above percentages of adolescents fail to find scholastic encouragement in their home, would it not be helpful to know how many enjoy that minimum of encouragement indicated by a place to study at home?

Special Place to Study at Home

Over half of the boys (54.6 per cent) state that they have a special place where they can go to do their homework and their studying; but a rather large number, in fact, almost half of them (44.1 per cent) report that they are not thus blessed. For some of these, this is evidently a problem, for a number feel rather strongly on this point. Some explain, "I have to do mine on the kitchen table with all my kid brothers yelling around disturbing me"; others, "I usually wait till supper is over and try to find place at a corner of the table, but how can a guy concentrate when the whole family is raising the roof?" Another states, "Sometimes I go up in the attic, I get so mad."

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[1] W. C. Reavis, *Pupil Adjustment in the Junior and Senior High School* (Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1926), 54.

Major Study Distractions

With the radio as one of the chief sources of amusement in the modern home we can well imagine this as a source of disturbance to the adolescent when the time comes around for him to do his homework; but, to what extent does it interfere? Rather, to what extent does he think it interferes? According to Figure 10, more than one out of every five boys (21 per cent) says it does so "frequently." An additional 32.4 per cent said that it interfered "occasionally," thus bringing the number to over 53 per cent of boys who say the radio is a source of interference in their studies, at least occasionally. But 45.2 per cent replied that it "rarely" interfered, though some of these added that it depended on the program: if there was talking, yes, but if there was soft music, it might be a help.

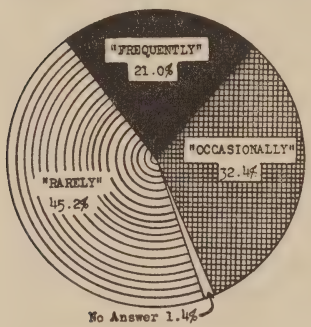

Figure 10. Extent to which the radio interferes with studies.

From distractions to study in the home we come to distractions to study in general. To obtain information on general study distractions, we designed the question, *What distracts you most when trying to concentrate?* and followed it with a check list of possible sources of distraction. As is evident from Table 12, some found it necessary to check several sources.

While the "radio," "noise," and "people talking" are distractions that interfere from without, "girls," "sports," "future plans," "impure thoughts," "troubles," and "social activities" are largely distractions that interfere from within, being largely the products of the boy's own imagination. Of course, these latter distractions have a real foundation; the boy cannot forget certain experiences, memories, and plans. An indirect hint as to the problem of purity for the adolescent is found in the number who find impure thoughts as their main hindrance in trying to concentrate — almost one out of every six.

Influence of Girls on Studies

Pursuing further the factors which hinder the adolescent in his studies, we put the question, *Do girls help or hinder you in your studies?* In the previous question we found that more than one out of every four mentioned "girls" as the biggest source of distraction when trying to concentrate. This question, however, is broader in scope; it touches not only upon girls as a source of distraction but likewise upon the extent to which the boy finds girls a help in his studies, or an actual hindrance.

Forty-two and seven tenths per cent of the boys indicated that

girls neither helped nor hindered them in their studies, or, as some put it, "They don't bother me," or "I'm indifferent to them." However, a fair proportion of these were freshmen, with the smallest number answering in this manner among the seniors. More than one out of five (22 per cent) plainly stated that girls hindered them

TABLE 12. Sources of Distraction Which Interfere With the Adolescent When He Tries to Concentrate

Source	*No. of boys*	*Trend**	*Per cent*	*Approximate ratio*
Radio	616	†	30.8	1 out of 3
Sports	552	0	27.6	1 out of 4
Noise	548	–	27.4	1 out of 4
Girls	510	†	25.5	1 out of 4
People talking	508	0	25.4	1 out of 4
Future plans	352	†	17.6	1 out of 6
Impure thoughts	326	†	16.3	1 out of 6
Troubles	206	†	10.3	1 out of 10
Social activities	160	†	8.0	1 out of 12
Miscellaneous	32		1.6	

* † Indicates trend for more and more boys to check this source as they progress through high school.
– Indicates opposite trend.
0 Indicates no trend in evidence.

in their studies. Almost an equal number (19.1 per cent) stated plainly that girls proved a help to them in their studies. The number who say that girls help them, as well as the number who say that girls hinder them in their studies, increases with each group from freshmen to seniors.

Some students qualified their answers. Four per cent say, girls "hinder me sometimes"; 2.8 per cent state, "they both help and hinder, it depends on the girl"; 2.3 per cent affirm, "sometimes they help." Three and four tenths per cent of the boys had difficulty in coming to a decision and therefore stated that they did not know, and 3.7 per cent left this question blank.

While it is interesting to know the extent to which high-school boys find girls a help or a hindrance in their studies, it is more helpful to learn why, or in what manner they find them a help or a hindrance. Though we did not specifically ask the boys this question, the blank lines after the question were sufficient invitation for a large number of them to add their reasons. We shall first offer sample answers of those who explain why some boys find girls helpful in their studies:

She helps me, gives me an objective, something to study for.
Helps, for my girl is tops in her school and I want to match her all around.
Help me — encourage me.
Help me by their example.

Help me, for they usually make me study before seeing them.
Help because you want to show off to them.
I like to be able to show my girl a string of straight *A*'s.
Help me — I don't want to be disgraced.
I don't want to be second to a girl.
I like to get high marks so she will look up to me.
Help as long as they don't go to the same school.
Help, for she's got me so that I want to be bright like her and not a dummy.

Those who find girls a hindrance to their studies make explanations like the following:

They hinder you because you spend too much time thinking about them.
Hinder because I'm with them when I should be studying.
If I go with a girl seriously I cannot study.
Hinder, they take up too much of your time.
They're a bother to you.
Hinder, but not enough to do any harm.
Interferes when I'm lovesick.
Hinder me quite a lot — I can't settle down afterwards.
A source of distraction for me, I'm thinking of them when I should be studying.
They keep me out too late.
Hinder because I can't study when I go out with a girl.
If I fall for a girl she hinders me for about a week till I get over it.

The principal reason why girls are considered a hindrance to the boy in his studies is that they are a source of distraction when he tries to concentrate. The chief reason why girls are considered a help is that they inspire the boy to succeed in his schoolwork.

Of course, it is rather obvious that the influence of girls, whether disturbing or helpful, increases with age; for relations between the sexes tend to become more serious, i.e., more personal, more frequently conceived as lasting, more extended to the total range of life as maturity approaches.

Having considered the extent to which the various factors in the adolescent's environment prove a hindrance to him in his studies, we now turn our attention to a consideration of the extent to which overanxiety about studies is one of his problems.

Anxiety Over Studies and Grades

While some adolescents may take a "devil-may-care" attitude toward their studies, to others school life proves a source of anxiety. Because they are overconscientious and take everything so seriously, because they are ambitious, or because of fear of failure in their studies, some boys actually are driven to worry over them. How frequent are such nullifying and depressing experiences in the life of the average high-school student? From the students themselves, in answer to the question, *Do you worry over your studies?* we learn that four out of

five worry over their studies at least occasionally. (See Fig. 11.) One fifth of the boys (20.6 per cent), however, say that they never worry over their studies. But for how many of those who do worry is this a problem? We find that half of the boys (50.2 per cent) say that they experience this anxiety only "occasionally." On the other hand, for 582 boys (29.1 per cent), worry over studies is an experience of "frequent" occurrence, and hence a problem.

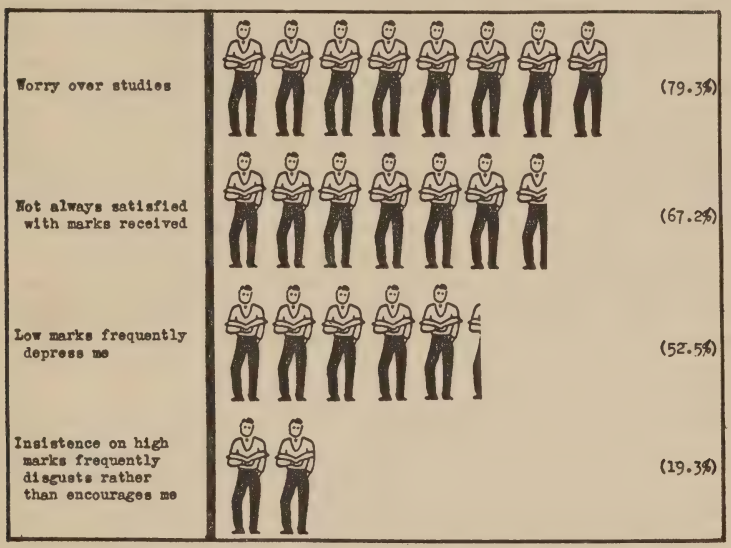

Figure 11. Problems centered in studies and school marks. Each symbol represents the views of 10 per cent of the high-school population.

Undoubtedly, school marks constitute a source of many of their worries. Boys fear lest they fail to satisfy their own ambition in the matter of marks or perhaps that of their parents. Teachers will agree that dissatisfaction with report-card returns is a familiar "gripe" that echoes and re-echoes through the corridors of many a high school. In an attempt to investigate the extent of such dissatisfaction we put the question, *Are you satisfied with the marks you get in school?* In response to this question, over one third (35.8 per cent) answer unqualifyingly that they are satisfied. A somewhat larger number, 42.6 per cent, say that they are "occasionally" satisfied, or that they are satisfied with some of their school marks but dissatisfied with others. More than one fifth (22.6 per cent), however, say that they are "rarely" satisfied with the marks they receive. In comparing the number who frequently worry over their studies (29.1 per cent) with the number who are not satisfied with their school marks (22.6 per cent), we note only a very slight correspondence. A study of the individual

replies reveals that some boys who are successful in their studies nevertheless worry over them, while others who are unsuccessful and dissatisfied with their marks do not consider the matter serious enough to be a source of worry.

Low Marks Depress

It is entirely possible, however, for a boy to be dissatisfied with his school marks and yet not allow himself to be depressed. For this reason, we followed immediately with the question, *Does getting low marks depress you seriously?* As is evident, the wording of the question excludes minor feelings of depression resulting from low marks. Considering the replies of all students to this question, we find that over half (52. 5 per cent) affirm that they do experience a serious "depression" when they get low grades. (See Fig. 11.) An additional 29.7 per cent affirm the same but qualify their reply by "sometimes," their reaction presumably depending upon how low the mark is and likewise the school subject in which it is received.

Apparently only one out of six students is either calloused to such experiences or knows how to take them philosophically, for only 17.3 per cent report that low marks never depress them seriously.

Attitude Toward Insistence on High Marks

These figures indicate how important school marks are to the adolescent and how "touchy" he is when they fall below his expectations. To a certain extent he is probably the victim of a prevalent overemphasis on school marks. Teachers and even parents sometimes give the student the impression that high marks are the main objective for which to strive. All of us know how overinsistence on a point can render it repulsive. For this reason we asked the adolescent, *Does insistence on "high marks" disgust you (rather than encourage you)?*

To this question nearly one out of five (19.3 per cent) replied "Yes, frequently," 28.1 per cent answered "Yes, occasionally," and over half of the boys (52 per cent) replied "Rarely." The remaining .6 per cent failed to respond. Thus, for nearly one fifth of the boys, "high marks" are insisted on in such a manner as to disgust rather than to encourage them. And the fact that a large number of others have this same experience, though less frequently, seems ample reason to commend this question to the reflective consideration of every parent and teacher.

School marks may indicate to the adolescent his degree of success or failure, depending on how just he thinks they are. To the type of student represented by the freshman and junior who appended the following comments, school marks are evidently a poor measure of success. The freshman complains, "The teachers have their own special pets whom they give high marks to and cheat the others." The junior points out that "teachers don't give enough credit to some and too

much to others; they do not keep accurate records (not just test marks) and when the time comes for a mark they make a guess at what it should be."

Failure

To get the adolescent's appraisal of his own success or failure in school, we presented him with the multiple-choice completions in the following: *In my studies I regard myself as: successful, only fairly successful, failing.* All but ten individuals responded; 37.1 per cent of the boys indicate that they regard themselves as "successful" in their studies, while well over half of them (57.8 per cent) feel that they are "only fairly successful." A number among the latter group explain that they are successful in some of their studies but not in others. Only 4.6 per cent of the boys believe that they are failing. In interpreting these figures, we must remember that our problemmaires were administered during the second month of the school year. The results received on our trial tests, administered during the last month of the school year, give us reason to believe that the number who feel they are failing would be considerably larger had we administered our problemmaires later in the school year. At any event, almost one out of twenty feels the odds are definitely against him already at the beginning of the school year.

Why Boys Feel They Fail

Now, if three out of five regard themselves as only fairly successful, or even as failing, to what causes do these somewhat inadequately adjusted adolescents lay the blame? We sought this information through the question, *If you are failing in some of your studies, what do you think are the reasons?* after which we presented a check list of possible causes. Our findings on this point are presented in Table 13.

Fully 50 per cent of the boys who feel that they are only fairly successful or failing lay at least part of the blame for their lack of full scholastic success on themselves. Adolescent frankness is again in evidence as we note how two of the first three reasons listed according to frequency of mention show him placing the cause within himself, admitting that he is not interested, or that he is not bright enough. A number who checked the reason, "am not interested," explained further that by this they meant they did not study enough.

According to the above, lack of interest in at least some of their scholastic work is definitely a problem for almost one fourth of the boys in our Catholic high schools. The high incidence of this problem practically compels one to conclude that the cause of this lack of interest does not lie wholly within the boy; the school can scarcely escape sharing part of the blame. Bingham, in treating the problems of the high-school student, points out that unsuitable courses in the

TABLE 13. Reasons for Failure as Given by 1248 Boys Who Feel Themselves "Failing" or "Only Fairly Successful" in Their Studies

Reasons	*No. of boys*	*Per cent**	*Per cent these represent in the general high-school population*
Am not interested	462	37.0	23.1
Had poor foundation	238	19.1	11.9
Not bright enough	165	13.4	8.3
Have poor teacher	142	11.4	7.1
Teacher doesn't understand me	139	11.1	7.0
Extracurricular activities interfere	106	8.5	5.3
Have to work after school	81	6.5	4.1
Teacher is prejudiced	57	4.6	2.9
Don't study, girls, lazy, not enough time, sickness, difficulty in concentrating	61	4.8	3.0
Don't know why	210	17.0	10.5

* Percentage in second column of figures based only on 1248 boys. Percentage in third column of figures based on 2000 boys.

school result in a lack of interest and a sense of failure.[2] And O'Brien, in his study of high-school failures, affirms that the large number of failures in secondary schools compels one to conclude that the causes of failure are as much the fault of the school and its procedures as of the individual himself.[3] And one of the first steps toward failure is a lack of interest.

The fact that so many students indicate this "lack of interest" should not be surprising, however, when we recall how it has been repeatedly found that a student with an I.Q. of 95 or less will not succeed in academic high-school work, and that an individual with an I.Q. below 110 will not profit from an academic course. Let us here recall the fact that the majority of our Catholic high schools offer largely the traditional college-preparatory academic course. Now, with a fair proportion of our high-school adolescents having an I.Q. below 100,[4] have we much reason to be surprised that 37 per cent of the 1248 boys we are presently considering complain of a lack of

[2] A. T. Bingham, "The Application of Psychiatry to High School Problems," *Mental Hygiene,* 9 (1925), 1–27.

[3] Francis P. O'Brien, *The High School Failures,* "Teachers College Contributions to Education," No. 102 (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1919), 27.

[4] In 1938 the Joint Committee on Maladjustment and Delinquency of the New York City Board of Education reported that about 25 per cent of the pupils entering the senior high schools of the city had intelligence quotients below 90. *Report and Recommendations of the Joint Committee on Maladjustment and Delinquency* (New York: Board of Education, 1938), 41.

interest in at least some of their studies? What else could we expect when the program of the school points toward preparation for college? And this in the light of recent figures which indicate that only 26.7 per cent of the graduates from our Catholic high schools ever enter college.[5]

What adds to the difficulty is that a fair number of those who are intellectually able and who regard themselves as "successful" in their studies manifest a dissatisfaction with the present curricular offerings, by stating they are "not interested" in their schoolwork. These find themselves caught in a curriculum which originally was vigorous and challenging but which has become insipid through the addition of easy electives and a reduction of academic standards. The failure of the school to provide a challenge for the more intellectual student's ability seems to figure in the reaction of those who, though admitting they are successful in their studies, nevertheless complain of a lack of interest in their schoolwork.

Coming back to a consideration of the other reasons for inadequate success, as advanced by those only fairly successful or failing, we note that over one fourth of the boys (27.1 per cent) lay the blame on their teachers, pointing out that they "have a poor teacher," that "the teacher doesn't understand me," that "the teacher is prejudiced." Again we must point out that in interpreting our findings we must bear in mind the common tendency in human beings to shift readily the blame for shortcomings to others. We must remember, too, that besides the extrinsic factors which underlie lack of interest, namely, unsuitable curricular offerings, the particular attitude which the pupil adopts toward the curriculum is also a factor. Some may be influenced by common opinion which devaluates current offerings.

Over one third of the students, however, advance other reasons which cannot well be classified as blaming either their teachers or themselves. They complain of a poor scholastic foundation, of interference by extracurricular activities, and of work after school. But more than one sixth (17 per cent) do not know why they are not more successful than they are. These evidently need a guiding hand to point out to them the reason for their lack of success.

Work After School

We sought further information on the extent to which work after school interferes with study, through the questions, *Do you have regular work to do after school or on week ends?* and *Does this work interfere with your studies?* These questions, however, were put to all the students. The answers received indicate that 43.3 per cent of the boys have regular work after school, or on week ends, or both,

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[5] Based on the 1942 Survey of the N.C.W.C., *N.C.W.C. National Summary* (Washington, D. C.: N.C.W.C., 1944), 61.

while somewhat over one sixth (17.4 per cent) say that this is true in their case only "occasionally," i.e., their work is unsteady, depending on circumstances. Thus, roughly 60 per cent of the boys in our Catholic high schools have at least on occasion "regular work" to do after school. Well over one third (39 per cent), though, say they do not.

Do those boys who have this work to do feel that it interferes with their studies? Three fourths of them say it does not. Of the other one fourth, only 8.1 per cent state unqualifyingly that this work does interfere, while the remaining 17 per cent say that it interferes only occasionally. Hence, the interference of afterschool work with studies is hardly more than a minor problem among our high-school adolescents.

Extracurricular Activity Problems

Further information was likewise sought on the question of interference from extracurricular activities. The extent to which this problem is present among our high-school boys is gathered from the answers received to the question, *Do you feel you have to participate in any school activities outside of studies which hinder you in any way?* Ten and nine tenths per cent of the students answered "Yes," 84.2 per cent answered "No," 4.2 per cent indicated that they were uncertain, while a few withheld their answer.

To know that a tenth of the boys feel they have to participate in activities which hinder them, is not sufficient to judge of the gravity of this problem. Hence we pursued the question further by asking the 218 boys who experienced this interference to name these interfering activities and to indicate in what way they were hindered by them.

Extracurricular Interference

The following table shows the frequency with which the various school activities are found by these 218 students to be a source of interference.

TABLE 14. Extracurricular Activities Which Prove a Source of Hindrance

Extracurricular activity	*Per cent**	*Extracurricular activity*	*Per cent**
Sports	49	Too many "drives"	5
Social activities	13	Sodality	4
School paper	8	Debating	3
Band, orchestra, choir	7	Dramatics	2
Offices and membership on committees	6	Other clubs	3

* Percentage based on the replies of 218 boys.

Thus, half of those who feel they have to participate in an activity which hinders them complain that this activity is one of the sports, while fully 50 per cent of these make specific mention of football. It is worthy of note that the majority so complaining were juniors and seniors. The number who mention social activities is perhaps somewhat larger than it should be, for some students give evidence of misunderstanding this question by mentioning "dates and dances" as school activities that interfere.

In what way do these activities hinder? In the two following ways, according to almost one half of the responses:

> Daily football practice makes me too tired in the evening to study and to do my homework decently.
> Long, daily practice leaves me no study or leisure time.

The following is a cross section of other explanations that were offered:

> School paper takes up too much time; it takes away my study periods.
> Drives and raffles hinder — you have to spend good time selling tickets.
> Sodality takes up a lot of time but doesn't do me any good.
> The afterthoughts consequent upon dances.
> Band and orchestra take away my study periods.
> Basketball practice, I get home late for supper and upset the whole family.
> I'm president and therefore have to participate in everything; it takes time and costs money.
> Too much sports — leads to carelessness in schoolwork.
> Football distracts from study and takes up too much time — but the guys would bring me a lily if I quit.

This last comment is typical of the adolescent; the opinion of others is a major factor in determining his conduct, even to the extent of the activities in which he engages.

A number of boys made rather sharp and lengthy comments about "drives" and collections. The following statement written by a junior is typical: "The school should not be taking up so many stiff collections. They should make allowance for boys who work after school and week ends. I go to this school to learn something. Instead I am constantly pestered with 'drives' and other things that require large sums of money. My father is a hard-working man and I believe it 'strains' him enough to pay my tuition and buy my books."

But, by far, the principal manner in which extracurricular activities interfere, as mentioned above, is in the way of deprivation of study time. And this largely because of "long, daily football and basketball practice sessions." As elaborated upon elsewhere,[6] these practice sessions sometimes amount to wanton waste of time; whereas, a more

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[6] Urban H. Fleege, S.M., "Hysteria in Athletics," *The Catholic School Journal*, 37 (1937), 129–130. "Intramural Athletics in the High School," *The Catholic School Journal*, 36 (1936), 216.

efficient administration of the school's athletic program would reduce these complaints to a minimum without risking adequate preparation for athletic contests. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that no more than 5 per cent of the general high-school boy population complained of athletic practice sessions taking up too much of their time. But upon second thought, does not this number represent a fair proportion of those in the school who actually participate in sports to the extent that their membership on the various school teams necessitates such practice?

Anyone who has had the privilege of working with adolescent boys knows what a major role athletics play in their lives. This is as it should be, for the adolescent has a real physical need of working off his excess energy, though we admit this may be done in activities other than sports. At the same time, such activities fill a definite social need in the adolescent. His social nature is unfolding. He must be given opportunities to develop himself into a socially efficient and socially acceptable human being. It is in the aiding of this socialization process that these extracurricular activities function. These activities provide opportunities for training in social-civic-moral relationships which cannot well be taken care of in subject-matter courses of the school.

Lending emphasis to the adolescent's physical need for such activities are the host of new and strengthened impulses growing out of his rapidly developing physical powers which create in him a craving for physical activity. It is this unfolding of his physical nature, together with his rather rapid emotional development at this time, that lends emphasis to his desire for more social contact. Hence, his accentuated physical and social needs, together with his characteristically adolescent desire to do what others do, tend to create within him a desire to participate in at least some of the activities of the school.

The Problem of Lack of Ability

If the adolescent experiences an inability to take part in these activities, to what extent does this bother him? Does he consider it one of his problems? Furthermore, in which activities does he feel this lack of ability to participate? The answers to these queries were sought through two questions: *If you lack ability to participate in certain activities, does this bother you much?* and *For which activities do you lack ability to participate?*

Our findings indicate that 1196 boys (59.8 per cent) feel they lack the ability to participate in one or more activity. But what proportion of these are considerably concerned over their inability to take part in certain of these activities? Our question on this point inquired only into the number of those who were "bothered much"; hence, no cognizance was taken of minor perturbances.

The replies received to the question, *If you lack ability to participate in certain activities, does this bother you much?* show that these 1196 adolescents are fairly well divided on this problem, though the majority (49.8 per cent) say they are not bothered much by the fact that they are unable to take part in certain activities. However, 43.9 per cent state without quibbling that their lack of ability does bother them. But the majority of these who reply in this manner are found to mention social activities or one of the major sports as the activity for which they feel a lack of ability. Among the general high-school population this means that for one out of every four boys (26.2 per cent) inability to participate in certain activities is a problem about which he is much concerned.

Lack of Ability in Sports

What are the specific activities in which these 1196 boys feel unable to participate? Table 15 presents us with an answer to this question, and again we have evidence of the importance with which the modern adolescent regards sports. Some of the boys, in mentioning the activity for which they felt a lack of ability, elected to add a word of explanation. The following remarks are typical: "I can't play football because I'm too light"; "Too small and a bit short for basketball"; "Social activities, am too clumsy and not tall enough"; "Sports that require you to have a lot of confidence"; "Am too awkward"; "Basketball, I'm too slow"; "Almost all, for I'm too little and puny." Though these remarks come from seniors as well as freshmen, many more of the latter complain of not being able to play football because they are too light and too small. One freshman puts his problem this way, "Do you think there is any sense in continuing to live when you are backward in studies and no good at all in sports?"

TABLE 15. Extracurricular Activities in Which 1196 Adolescents Feel a Lack of Ability to Participate

Activity	*Per cent*		*Per cent these represent in the general high-school population*	
Sports		82.7		49.5
Major sports (football, basketball, baseball)	51.4		30.7	
"Sports"	17.3		10.4	
Minor sports (track, golf, swimming, tennis)	10.4		6.2	
"Some of the sports"	3.6		2.2	
Social activities, dancing, etc.		13.5		8.1
Dramatics, speech, debate		12.2		7.3
Band, glee club, orchestra		4.5		2.7
Literary, school paper, scholastic activities		1.3		.8
"Leadership," Sodality		1.2		.7

Lack of Opportunity to Participate

With these activities, particularly those of an athletic nature, thus occupying such an important role in the adolescent's mind, any serious lack of opportunity for engaging in them is likely to call forth a rather sharp reaction from him. To sense his reaction on this point, as well as to find out the extent to which the extracurricular program in the Catholic high school meets with his satisfaction, we asked him, *Do you have sufficient opportunities to participate in activities you are interested in?*

While less than a fourth (23.8 per cent) feel they are not provided with sufficient opportunities for engaging in activities in which they are interested, the large majority (72.2 per cent) are satisfied with the opportunities they have at hand. As usual, a few were either uncertain of their response or failed to answer.

The majority of the 476 boys who feel that they have insufficient opportunities for participating in activities in which they are interested had some form of athletics in mind, if we can judge from their comments. In one school fully a third of the student body voice the opinion of the junior who says, "I do not see why this diocese does not allow sports in the Catholic high schools." Another adds, "The problem of no interscholastic sports in this city is one reason why I like to go out at night so often." A senior pleads for more recreational activities thus: "It seems to me that boys do wrong things because they feel, well, what else can I enjoy myself at. If we had a schedule of sports and social activities, then we would have no time for such things that are wrong. In other words, keep us busy all the time in a good way."

Then there are those who add, "For a fellow who isn't able, or who's hindered from playing in sports, the school should provide a variety of activities." However, not all ask for more athletic opportunities, as is evident from the following comment from a senior: "This school stresses athletics and forgets all about debating, public speaking, dramatics, and clubs engaged in other types of activities." The number commenting in this manner, though, was relatively small.

Reactions to the Curriculum

From a consideration of the boys' reactions to the extracurricular program of the school we now turn to investigate the problems of the adolescent that grow out of the heart of the curriculum, the school subjects themselves. If the adolescent finds himself ill adjusted to his school courses, i.e., if he has to take subjects for which he feels he is not fitted, a host of problems is likely to arise, many of which have far-reaching effects in other areas.

Unsatisfactory Adjustment to Curricular Offerings

To the question, *Do you feel you are well fitted for all the school subjects you have to take?* well over half (57 per cent) of the students answered "Yes," thus indicating an adequate adjustment, at least in their minds, to their school program. A disturbingly large number (41.4 per cent), though, say they feel they are not well fitted for the school subjects they have to take. (See Fig. 12.)

This means that, since over half of the boys in our Catholic high schools feel that their abilities are equal to the school subjects they have to take, we can expect a minimum of problems in the school life of the majority of our students; for a satisfactory adjustment at this point goes far toward satisfactory relations in the other problem areas.

On the other hand, in the lives of two fifths of the boys who feel they have to take subjects for which they are not fitted, we can expect a complication of school problems, more or less grave, depending on the degree to which the adolescent feels he is ill adjusted. Thus, we have evidence that unsatisfactory adjustment to courses constitutes a definite problem area in the high school. These findings, together with previously quoted figures relative to failure or only mediocre success in studies, throw light on the inadequacy of the traditional curriculum in the face of the influx during recent years of large numbers of students, many of whom have only mediocre ability.

More enlightening are the answers received to our inquiry regarding the subjects for which the above 41.4 per cent feel they are not fitted. Table 16 indicates the frequency with which the various school subjects are mentioned.

From a study of this table, we observe that more than eight out of ten of the boys who feel ill adjusted to their courses mention either mathematics or Latin, or both, the two subjects which constitute the essential subjects in the traditional academic curriculum. This represents one out of every three boys in the general high-school population. While it is true that for some of these this feeling of being not intelligent enough to meet the demands of the course may be due to temporary difficulties, the weight of our evidence seems to indicate a more permanent maladjustment in the case of the majority. Pointing in this direction are the findings of Reavis, who, in quoting figures on subject failures in high school, reports that the largest number of failures occur in mathematics, with Latin second, and foreign language third.[7] It is interesting to note how this same order maintains in our findings relative to the school subjects for which our adolescents feel themselves not fitted.

Naturally, this does not mean that all of these boys so replying

[7] W. C. Reavis, *Pupil Adjustment in Junior and Senior High Schools*, 9.

TABLE 16. Frequency With Which 828 Boys Say They Are Not Fitted for Certain School Subjects

Subject	*Per cent*	*Per cent these represent in the general high-school population*
1. Mathematics	43.4	18.0
2. Latin	37.7	15.7
3. English	14.7	6.1
4. French	12.7	5.3
5. German	11.1	4.6
6. History	11.1	4.6
7. Science	9.0	3.8
8. Commercial subjects	6.0	2.5
9. Religion	4.6	1.9
10. "Most of them"	2.4	1.0
11. Others	2.1	.9

are intellectually unable to handle these courses. Sometimes this feeling of inadequacy is not a real inability at all, but rather the result of a previous unpleasant emotional experience which has been transferred to the subject itself, as, for example, in the case of a failure or a severe reprimand from a teacher. As Richmond points out, "the frequency with which the inability to learn mathematics is connected with an emotional attitude toward the subject is remarkable."[8] To assume this fact as the reality in the majority of the above cases would be unduly stretching a partial explanation. But it cannot be denied that the difficulty with Latin is to a considerable extent emotional. The attitude, "Why learn this old stuff? It's no use in life," inhibits and disrupts the memory impression that might be made if this emotional block were not present. A certain role may also be played by the traditional idea that Latin is "so difficult." Of course, we do not deny that Latin is more difficult than certain other courses in the curriculum.

A recent survey of the Catholic high schools in one of the areas covered by this present study reported mathematics as the most disliked of all high-school subjects.[9] This indirectly supports our findings, for it is only a short step from a feeling of being ill fitted for a subject to a consequent loss of interest and dislike for it.

There is somewhat of a saving feature, however, in our results. Most of those reporting on the subjects for which they feel unfitted mention only one subject. A very small proportion find themselves so roundly ill adjusted as to mention "most of them."

[8] Winifred Richmond, *The Adolescent Boy* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1933), 150.

[9] *The Catholic Herald Citizen* (Milwaukee), April 17, 1937.

Subjects Which Adolescents Deem Impractical

The curriculum, through its subject offerings, may cause a diminution of scholastic interest and become a source of further problems in yet another way. If the course of studies is too limited or impractical, the adolescent begins to feel that the good he is deriving from the course is not in keeping with the efforts he is asked to make, and, as a result, his center of interest shifts to areas outside the school. To get the adolescent's own reaction to this phase of the curriculum, we designed the question, *Do you feel you have to take subjects which will not do you any good later?* The answers to this question will indicate the extent to which our high-school boys feel they have to take subjects that are not meeting their needs, subjects which are not practical enough to prepare them for later life. A further question inquired of the adolescent which subjects he would place in this category.

To the first of these queries, the startling number of 1400, exactly seven out of ten, affirmed that they had to take one or more subjects which they felt would not do them any good later. Scarcely more than a fourth of the students (27.6 per cent) were so well convinced of the value of the subjects they were taking that they felt all of their courses were preparing them for the future. (See Fig. 12.) The small number represented by 2.4 per cent were puzzled and could not come to a decision either way.

Figure 12. Pupil appraisal of subjects in the curriculum. Each figure represents the opinion of 10 per cent of the high-school population.

Before considering the implications of these figures, we shall present in Table 17 the frequency with which these 1400 boys named various subjects in the curriculum as impractical for their future lifework. The reader will recall that these figures represent the adolescent's subjective reactions to the educational offerings as presented to him in the Catholic high school. As such, these findings have value in a study investigating the adolescent's problems, for the self-revealed reactions of the adolescent are the best indications we have of the stuff that constitutes his problems.

TABLE 17. Frequency With Which 1400 Adolescents Say Certain School Subjects Will Not Do Them Any Good Later On

Subject	*Per cent*	*Per cent these represent in the general high-school population*
1. Latin	46.2	32.4
2. Ancient history	34.1	23.9
3. Algebra	23.3	16.3
4. Geometry	22.6	15.9
5. English literature	16.4	11.5
6. French	16.0	11.2
7. Modern history	13.1	9.3
8. German	12.4	8.7
9. Church history	9.3	6.5
10. English grammar	8.7	6.1
11. Chemistry	8.6	6.0
12. American history	8.6	6.0
13. Physics	6.4	4.4
14. General science	6.0	4.1
15. Shorthand	4.3	3.0
16. Religion	3.4	2.4
17. Bookkeeping	3.0	2.1
18. Typing	2.1	1.5
19. Others	1.7	1.2

Again, we find Latin and mathematics, the latter comprising algebra and geometry (45.9 per cent), topping the list of subjects which the students feel will be of no value later on. One out of every three boys feels that Latin has no practical value, while almost the same proportion feel this way about mathematics, with algebra and geometry sharing about equally in frequency of mention.

This means that the adolescent looks askance at the educational values associated with Latin and mathematics; he wants their utility to be demonstrated.

Another subject ranking high in impracticality, according to the opinion of adolescents, is ancient history. This subject is followed by English literature and the modern languages in the ratings of the students. This seems to offer evidence that a fair proportion of adolescents have not learned to appreciate cultural values; or, as was pointed out previously, they have unsatisfactory teachers in these subjects and hence have transferred their dislike for the teacher to the subject itself.

The number of boys who regard English grammar as impractical is only half the number of those who see no value in English literature. This seems to indicate a healthy trend in our Catholic high schools to emphasize the functional side of grammar. As Gruen points out,

new educational theories are insisting that "only those elements of grammar be taught which actually and ordinarily function in daily speech."[10] Though not all of our schools have adopted this functional approach, according to the reactions of our students, it would seem that a fair majority have.

Traditional Curriculum Unsatisfactory

The above findings should prove enlightening to the teacher who is anxious to develop in his students a proper appreciation of the value of the subject he is teaching. It is not difficult to realize how an adolescent, unappreciative of the worth of a course in preparing him for his future, loses interest in his work, develops difficulties in other phases of his school life, and gradually gravitates toward failure. As our results indicate, the big difficulty for these boys consists in a lack of motivation, due largely to their failure to understand the purposes of certain school subjects. Perhaps this in turn is partially due to the teacher's inadequate acquaintance with the preparation demanded in the various vocational fields. If the teacher does all in his power to remove this lack of motivation by helping the student to conceive clear-cut goals and reasons why, this problem should be reduced considerably for many an adolescent.

On the other hand, we cannot escape the fact that the traditional academic curriculum, with Latin and mathematics as core subjects, was developed for the intellectual elite, and not for the common hordes now surging through our secondary schools. Hence, the responsibility for proper course adjustment cannot be placed solely on the student. The school must share this responsibility and must not allow pedagogical stereotypes to interfere with the right of all students to develop their potentialities. In recent years, some of the more progressive Catholic high schools have made progress in adapting their educational offerings to the needs of a changed student population. Still, much remains to be done. Perhaps the great lag between the needs of high-school adolescents and adequate educational provision for them is due to an inadequate conception of the function of the high school in the world of today. The high school is no longer an institution which prepares a select few for college; it is an educational institution for all the adolescents, where all are prepared according to their abilities for a full life, both here and hereafter. While differences in abilities require differentiation in subject matter, specialization in its strict sense has no place in the modern high school.

As long as we have the present large numbers in our high schools, we cannot look for a reduction of problems for the adolescent in this field of curriculum adjustment until we have reorganized our educa-

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[10] Ferdinand B. Gruen, O.F.M., *English Grammar in American High Schools* (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America, 1934), 243.

tional program and have better adapted the choice and quality of our educational offerings to the actual adolescent material with which we have to deal.

Appraisal of Total School Program

The picture, however, is not quite as dark as our findings might lead us to conclude. Though much is amiss in our present curricular offerings, still, when the adolescent is asked to consider the total preparation the school is giving him, not only in a single subject which he may consider impractical, but in all the subjects taken as a whole, together with extracurricular helps as well as teacher influences, his

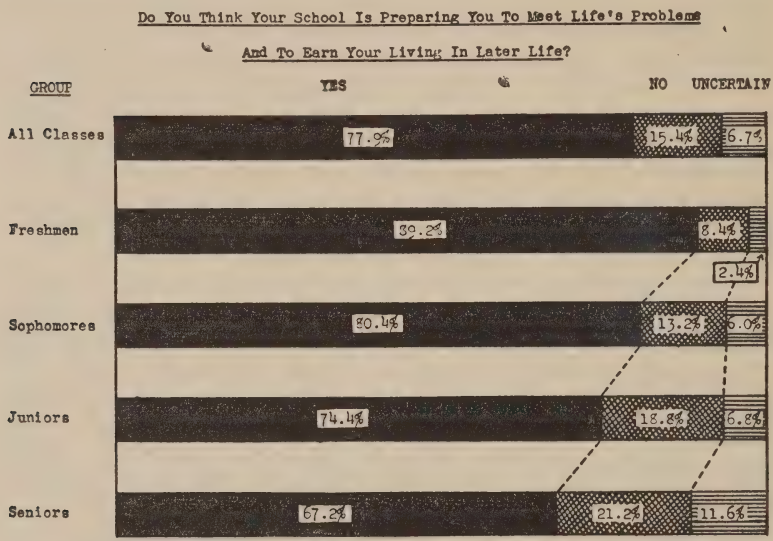

Figure 13. Boys' opinion of how well their high-school training is preparing them for the future.

general judgment is favorable. To get his summary appraisal of the total preparation that the school is giving him for his later life, we asked him, *Do you think your school is preparing you to meet life's problems and to earn your living in later life?* To this, 77.9 per cent of the boys answered "Yes." (See Fig. 13.)

Thus, while adolescents are pointedly critical of much of what the high school has to offer, yet, when they are asked to make a general judgment of what the high school is giving them, they feel that the sum of the influences to which they are being exposed in the high school is helping to prepare them for their life that lies ahead.

More than one out of seven (15.4 per cent), however, feels that his present high-school training is not preparing him to meet life's

problems. It is interesting to note that the number thus dissatisfied with the general preparation that the school is giving them is highest among the seniors (21.2 per cent) and lowest among the freshmen (8.4 per cent). However, the number who feel that their high-school training is preparing them for the future is just the reverse: it is highest among the freshmen (89.2 per cent) and lowest among the seniors (67.2 per cent); in both instances the trend is gradual and consistent, as is evident in Figure 13. These findings support a trend noted above[11] for upperclassmen to become less satisfied with the educational offerings of the school as they approach graduation. An underlying factor in this trend is, of course, the increasing seriousness of the problem as well as a growing apprehension of whether one will prove adequate to his life situations. It is quite evident that there is a strong subjective factor involved.

Summarizing, then, somewhat more than one out of every seven boys in our Catholic high schools feels that his high-school training is not preparing him to meet the problems of life that lie ahead. The proportion of boys in each school who are of this opinion differs considerably, according to the school and the educational program offered.

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[11] Cf. *supra*, 99.

Chapter 10

THE ADOLESCENT AND HIS RELIGION

Reactions to the Religion Course

Perhaps the reader was surprised in the last chapter at the number (3.4 per cent), even though small, who felt that the religion course they were taking would not do them any good later on. One really has reasons for surprise, for the period of adolescence should be the golden age for the teacher of religion, since the adolescent experiences at this time a religious awakening. Truths which he formerly accepted without much ado, he now begins to understand and ponders for deeper meanings. His expanded intellectual powers permit him to conceive truths and relations formerly impossible to comprehend; his more adequately developed emotions, as well as his more highly sensitive feelings, work together to lend a keen and heightened sensitivity to every religious thought. As a result, we have a natural increase of interest on the part of the adolescent in matters religious.

At the same time, however, this same development makes it possible for other attractions to be more appealing, not the least of which is his own developing power of sex. For this reason, religion must be interestingly presented, or the adolescent will switch his heightened interests of this period to religion's host of attractive foes.

The Religion Course Must Be Livable

The teaching of religion during the period of adolescence must, above all, be practical, and practical in the sense that the boy himself sees and realizes this practicality. As one senior puts it, "Religion should be shown to us in such a way that it becomes real; it should be applied to everyday life." Another writes that "Religion courses should be made more current and more livable."

At this point, we must not forget that the average adolescent does not generalize. Hence, the training issuing from the religion course must be specific, and that in as many phases of the principle under consideration as possible. For it is only by translating abstract truths into meaningful concepts and following through with specific applications that the average adolescent will arrive at an understanding of the truth and be able to grasp a sound basis for his moral actions.

But if he fails to see the practical application of his religion course to his own daily life, it will not be long before his interest in this subject will be a barely flickering flame, smothered with increasing

frequency by a thousand other more attractive interests storming in on him from every side.

We cannot emphasize enough the principle of functionalism: "The business of the educator, whether parent or teacher, is to see to it that the greatest possible number of ideas acquired by children and youth are acquired in such a vital way that they become *moving* ideas, motive forces in the guidance of conduct."[1]

Because of the importance of this point in the adolescent's moral life, we asked him, *Do you find your religion course practical enough, i.e., easy to apply to your everyday life?* It is indeed gratifying to learn that over three fourths (77.9 per cent) of the boys found it possible to answer in the affirmative, indicating that their religion course was practical enough; but it is disturbing to learn that almost one fifth (18.2 per cent) found it necessary to answer in the negative. (See Fig. 14.)

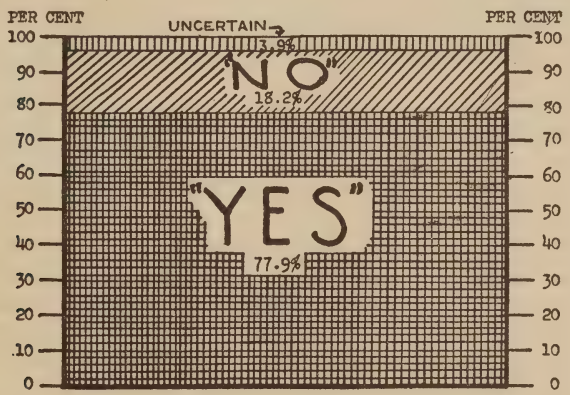

Figure 14. Do students find the religion course practical enough?

It would be presumptuous to lay the blame for the impracticality of the religion course on the adolescents themselves. Considering that the adolescent experiences a natural interest in religion at this period, it would perhaps be less presumptuous to lay the blame at the door of those who teach this course. Analyzing the answers to the above question, we note a tendency for the answers to vary according to schools; but we note no tendency for the answers to vary according to the status of their teachers, no tendency favoring those, who because of years of training should be better equipped, at least

[1] John Dewey, *Moral Principles in Education* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1909), 2.

from the point of view of content, for the teaching of religion. This finding was likewise discovered to hold true in answers to subsequent questions regarding religion in the high school. We offer this observation since this point is occasionally brought up for discussion.

Sister Mary Antonina's findings regarding the practicality of the high-school religion course are of interest at this juncture. Four hundred high-school graduates averaging eight years out of high school were asked, among other questions, "What were the things in your religion class that meant most to you?" and "What were the things that the school failed to give you, and that you think ought to be stressed?" To the former question, the answers in substance were: "Subject matter relating to 'How to lead a good Christian life,' concrete presentation and avoidance of formalism, personality, interest, sympathy, good example." To the latter question, the responses summarized were: "Failed to deal with practical life problems; did not give us ways of putting what we learned into effect; failed to deal with our moral problems, personal questions, our future life."[2] Thus, both from the positive and negative approach, practicality in the religion course is stressed as the feature which adolescents prize most highly.

"Be Practical and Sensible in Teaching Sex"

One phase of the religion course where the adolescent demands practicality above all is in the question of sex. He wants to know the true facts, what is right and what is wrong. He experiences a natural curiosity regarding these matters and, in his less impassioned moments, realizes the harm that comes to him when this curiosity is satisfied at the wrong source. For this reason, a number of adolescents are plainly puzzled by the school's hesitant approach to this subject which they regard as most important. The following comments give us an insight into the adolescent's mind on this point:

> My teachers are old fashioned in facts about sex. Today boys hear about sex from the street so much that they should be told the real truth about sex when they are young so they don't get the idea that it is something dirty.
>
> I think that all schools should help their students by teaching them about sex instead of letting companions instruct them.
>
> I think that if we got more sex education in school we would have more clean conversation.
>
> Girls are an everyday occurrence. Why not tell us what to do and what not to do in their presence. Every school should have a club where social and spiritual problems may be brought up and talked over.
>
> I think that sex instruction should be given more and stressed more. The more of it, the better the boys will turn out. I do not think that the average boy knows the responsibility he has in regard to young women. I know that up until this year I have not taken it so seriously (*From a senior*).

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[2] Sister M. Antonina, C.D.P., "Religion in the Catholic High School Viewed by Some of Its Graduates." *Journal of Religious Instruction,* 3 (1933), 852–868.

Why don't they have brothers come around and teach the boys on sex in schools where sisters teach mixed groups?

Catholic schools should teach more about sex in a clean Christian manner and not let us get it the way we learn it on the streets. It would set the boys on the right track and clear up their minds on this subject.

I believe the Church would perform a great service if she in some way saw to it that we were taught the "facts of life" when we needed them.

No, not practical enough, more explanation is needed in matters of purity.

School should explain to us the ways of our nature so we could understand our sex problems. I say this because I, still at the age of 18, don't understand one sixteenth of these things. And I would rather learn these things from my teachers than from what I can pick up from the streets.

I think the schools of today should educate the students more in the matter of sex and its problems. Let us know what is right and what is wrong. It would help the boy more than all the street talk he could get.

No, how can I overcome temptations?

No, I can truthfully say that I don't believe matters pertaining to sexual life and morals are properly explained. Now, St. —— is a school where there are just boys and taught by priests. Here the problems could be studied without embarrassment to teacher or pupil. I believe many of the troubles in later life can be traced back to a person's school days, when these things were not cleared up.

Schools should teach the facts of life to boys because many of them get the wrong impression of it when they pick it up off the streets. (Then in heavy large letters): *To the Person Who May Read This*, Please try to enforce my comment; my comment is surely not the only one of this kind you have read so far.

On no other subject were the adolescents who were involved in this study more vociferous and profuse in their comment than on the question of purity and sex. As is evident from the above, this problem touches them closely. Ever conscious of these new urges, they want to know what they can do about them — how bring them under control. Some, fortunately, realizing the poison that comes from tainted sources, are definitely urgent in their request for adequate information from the school. The teacher's shying away from a sympathetic treatment of their difficulties in this field only adds to their confusion and, as a result, they surround the whole problem with an unwholesome air of secrecy, as something to be explored only on the quiet. Such an attitude only sharpens the adolescent's desire for sex knowledge, with the result that he finally goes to sources which, up to this time, he may have been able to resist. Hence, he not only listens *to* sex-colored conversation, but listens *for* it.

Desire More Information on Purity and Sex

In view of the importance of this problem in the adolescent's mind, we thought it helpful to learn how effective, in his opinion, the school is in giving him the necessary sex information. Hence the question, *Do you feel there is sufficient explanation of sex and purity in your school?* The number who answered "Yes" to this question is practically equaled by the number who answered "No": 47.1 per cent

thought the school offered sufficient explanation in these matters while 46.7 per cent thought just the opposite. Five and eight tenths per cent were doubtful while eight boys failed to respond.

It is true, perhaps, that some may ask for more information on purity and sex just out of curiosity. However, the seriousness with which the boys answered these questions and the nature of the explanations volunteered as to why they felt the school should instruct them on this subject seem to indicate that hardly more than a few may have been prompted by this motive. Thus, with nearly half of the boys accusing the school of not giving them sufficient explanation on this important matter, a definite need would seem to exist for reconsideration of this question on the part of teachers of religion.

Feel "Fed Up" on Religion

If the religion course does not help the adolescent to find solutions to problems of vital interest to him, if it is too theoretical and uninteresting, and if it is not adopted to the psychology of the adolescent, the boy is likely to swing over to the extreme attitude of thinking that he is getting too much religion because it appears to him to be "old stuff," and, as a result, he feels "fed up" on it. It is hardly necessary to point out that such an attitude renders the adolescent impervious to religious influence. Not only that, but a religion course prompting such a reaction may do more harm than good. These are harsh words, it is true, but any influence which closes the mind of the adolescent to religion calls for strong treatment.

To what extent are such unfortunate reactions prevalent among the adolescents in our high schools? The question, *Do you think there is too much religion in your school and as a result feel "fed up" on it?* brought forth the answer. Exactly 300 boys (15 per cent) affirmed that they felt "fed up" on religion in their school. Of course, a great majority (81.4 per cent) definitely stated "No" in reply to the above question, and a few were doubtful; but with more than one out of seven reporting himself "fed up" on religion in our schools, something must be radically ill adapted in our religious efforts. The reader will recall that the number who found their religion course impractical correlates well with this finding.[3] If, as Kirsch points out, "the years between fourteen and sixteen are the most dangerous in a boy's life, and most boys who go wrong do so between nine and sixteen,"[4] what can we expect from those harboring the above-mentioned unfortunate attitude toward religion?

It is true, it would be unjust for one to blame religion teachers entirely for such reactions on the part of their students. Evidently

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[3] Cf. *supra*, 147.

[4] Felix M. Kirsch, O.F.M.Cap., *Catholic Teacher's Companion* (New York: Benziger Bros., 1924), 339.

a factor partially responsible for this distaste for religion is the lack of interest in things religious consequent upon more or less frequent lapses from the path of moral virtue. And those of us acquainted with adolescents know that the moral conduct of some is not always that which would rejoice the hearts of the saints. But, in general, can we excuse teachers from all responsibility? As Father Lord says, "If religion seems dull, it seems dull, not because God has failed us, but because we leaders of youth have expected God to do all the work."[5]

The Appeal of the Revolutionary

We forget that religion can be made an exciting thing, particularly to the adolescent, even though it makes heavy demands on him. A revolution is exciting and adolescents crave revolution, a throwing overboard of the world's standards for those of Christ, and a revolution which calls for their best efforts.

There is a strong undertow pulling at our Catholic adolescents rendering the struggle between grace and fallen nature vigorously acute. The subtle influences of modern life, surrounding them on all sides with a sophisticated "tolerance," tend to upset their religious thinking and foster, instead, the idea that religion is a frill and not something fundamental. Then follows shortly the tendency to hide the light of faith under a bushel. These tendencies can and must be effectively worsted by the high-school teacher of religion. Let him keep an eye on the psychology of adolescence and play up the revolutionary idea of the Catholic religion and he will blot out once and for all the idea that religion is not necessary for the modern man of tomorrow.

With this lack of an appreciation for the need of religious instruction existing as a problem among 15 per cent of our adolescents — what makes matters worse, they fail to recognize this as one of their problems — we cannot emphasize sufficiently the appeal of the revolutionary to the adolescent mind. It is this fact which largely explains the success of communism among youth. In our presentation of religion we must remember that adolescents are attracted by the new, charmed by the different, won over by the daring. Note how the new shibboleths of the hour become their rallying cry. These are so many challenges to us as teachers of religion.

Even we adults are dulled into insensibility when we have to listen to the monotonous repetition of truths which we have heard expressed in the same way time and time again. But how we perk up when the speaker clothes the truth in a modern parable, or drives the spike of truth into our daily lives by a practical illustration. So, too, the adolescent's reaction. Our presentation must suggest that we are in close touch with his life, and this calls for freshness of presentation.

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[5] Daniel A. Lord, *Some Notes on the Guidance of Youth*, 173.

Truths must be presented in a new light, taking cognizance of the adolescent's changed interests. Stress on Christ's heroicity now gives way to stress on Christ's altruism. We have the material; the truth that is ancient, yet ever new; and we have the most responsive, vibrant, eager human beings to work with — adolescents. But they are human, as are we, and unless our presentation of religion is different, convincing, catchy, pointedly practical, we need not be surprised to see them regard religion as out of date.

Religion: a Help Versus a Hindrance

In an effort to sound out more definitely the extent to which a distaste for religion has taken possession of the boys in our high schools we asked them, *Do you feel religion is more of a hindrance than a help in your life?* Naturally, those who answer "Yes" to this question have not traveled far in the way of true appreciation of the Catholic religion. Fortunately, more than nine out of ten (93.1 per cent) do not regard their religion as more of a hindrance than a help. Of those remaining, 3 per cent did not know whether it was more of a hindrance or more of a help; 3.7 per cent thought it was more of a hindrance than a help, and a few did not answer. Thus, for only 74 in 2000 has religion been so inadequately presented that they have gone to the extreme of regarding it as more of a hindrance than a help in their lives. Of course, for some, the strong pull of immorality and the annoyance of a reprimanding conscience may be a contributing factor here. As one lad put it, "I think that there is too much to do in being a Catholic."

Positive Versus Negative Attitudes Toward Religion

One of the causes of this distaste for religion may be an overemphasis of the negative side of religion and a lack of emphasis on the positive side. Because of an overemphasis on the prohibitive side, the adolescent can easily come to regard religion as a series of "don'ts" which hamper his life rather than as something which is glowingly precious and vital for his everyday happiness. Unless he is led to look upon his religion as a source of joy, enriching his own life as well as that of others, enabling all to get the most out of living, he is liable to develop the attitude of habitually regarding religion as a "stop signal" on the road to pleasure rather than as a guide to greater joy.

In an attempt to see to what extent the boy's religious training has failed to develop within him the proper attitude toward religion, thus reflecting the extent to which the prohibitive side of religion has been overstressed, we asked the question, *Honestly, do you feel that religion is a "joyful" thing?* As shown in Figure 15, almost two thirds (65.1 per cent) of the boys replied in the affirmative; but more than

a fifth (22 per cent) answered in the negative. One senior added rather poignantly, "All my religion teachers (but one) try to make religion a drudgery when it isn't. Why do they take this attitude?"

A larger number than usual (12.8 per cent) were uncertain of their attitude on this question, while a few failed to respond.

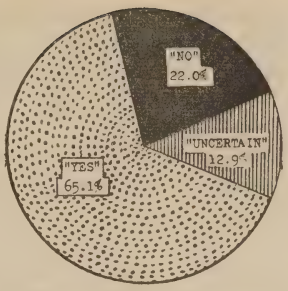

Figure 15. Do adolescents regard religion as a source of joy?

What do these figures mean? If anything, they indicate that the previous religious training of one out of every three boys in our high schools has failed to develop within them a proper and wholesome attitude toward religion. In their minds, the prohibitive side of religion is dominant. Their instructions have failed to give them an insight into the true purpose of religion; they have not been brought to realize that religion for them holds the secret to fuller happiness. In their previous religion courses, the dominant note has been "thou shalt not." Both the home and the school as well as the Church have failed to give them the idea that the moral laws as expressed in the Commandments are "Maker's instructions," born not so much out of infinite knowledge as out of infinite love. Evidently, the high-school course in religion, while sharing in the credit for the fact that two thirds of the students regard their religion as a thing of joy, must share in the blame for the fact that one third do not have this attitude.

As has been pointed out previously, the attitude the adolescent takes toward what he learns in religion is far more important than the knowledge he acquires. Unless this principle is kept uppermost in the mind of the teacher of religion, the principal fruit that should be derived from the religion course will be forfeited for the less important ends.

It is hardly necessary to point out the host of additional problems that loom up in the religious life of the adolescent who has failed to achieve a positive attitude toward religion. He cannot see the reason for this, and he cannot see the reason for that. At every point where religion touches his life, his unfortunate attitude toward religion renders all his adjustments more difficult. Instead of proving a source of encouragement, and the means for solving most problems, religion itself becomes a problem.

That our approach to religion is not always the correct one has repeatedly been brought out by Catholic educators. Communists have charged that while we Catholics preach "pie in the sky when we die," we insist that in the meantime unmitigated gloom must be our lot on earth. Our findings reaffirm the truth of this charge, at least to a too large extent. Yet, this doctrine of gloom hardly accords with the

glad tidings of Christ. In each of the Beatitudes, Christ promises us happiness on earth as a token of greater happiness hereafter. This approach makes a particular appeal to adolescents characteristically hungry for happiness, and that rightly so, for we are born for joyous things. Their drive for joy will be satisfied; it is for us teachers of religion to substitute the true and lasting for the passing, tinseled appearance of happiness with which a sophisticated world surrounds them.

Adolescents who reject that false brand of religion, which, as they complain, "takes all the fun out of life," are right in so objecting; for God wants all, both young and old, to find joy in Him, even here on earth. The recently published Catechism, *Catholic Faith,* stresses on its very first page this fact in answer to the question, "Why did God make you?"

> God made me: to know Him, and to serve Him in this world, so that I may be happy through Him in this life, and with Him forever in heaven.[6]

It is only by our stressing this positive approach that our adolescents will be able to withstand the bad example of a world in mad pursuit of tinseled pleasures.

Religious Doubts in Adolescents

In view of the adolescent's extreme sensitivity to the opinions of others, we wondered whether religious doubts, prompted by conflicting moral opinions, constituted a large problem area in the adolescent's religious life. Accordingly, we asked the question, *Do the things you hear from others ever cause you to question certain things in your religion?* Since our age is one of rapid change in values and social ideals, it is quite possible that these doctrines, sporting the cloak of revolution, are likely to have an upsetting, devastating influence on the viewpoints of the adolescent who naturally harbors a flair for the revolutionary.

Conflicting religious opinions in the adolescent's environment easily have an unsettling effect upon his thinking because he has not yet come to the point where he sees the full meaning of certain phases of his religion and the true grounds upon which it is justified. Reasons which previously satisfied his mind are now subjected to closer scrutiny. His expanding intellectual powers want to know the bases on which his beliefs rest. If the answer is: "Because authority says so," he wants to know why he should accept such authority.

Heretofore, ideas which may have dwelt side by side in his consciousness without any sense of clash or conflict may now reveal to his more mature and alert mind certain incongruities and contradictions. On the other hand, certain religious ideas may appear in-

[6] *Catholic Faith,* edited by Felix M. Kirsch, O.F.M.Cap., and Sister M. Brendan (New York: P. J. Kenedy and Sons, 1939), 1.

congruous because he now only understands the truths partially; as a result, doubts arise. The expressions of varying religious viewpoints serve to emphasize this lack of assurance in matters religious; they set him questioning. He begins to wonder whether there is not a grain of truth in what the other side has to say. Thus, his incomplete religious formation proves to be fertile ground for the influence of modern ideas on morals. But to what extent do these conflicting ideas in his environment create for him mental difficulties in the form of disturbing doubts?

According to our findings, four out of ten admit that the things they have heard from others have caused them to question certain things in their religion; the other 60 per cent say that their experiences have not prompted such doubts. The frequency with which such doubts are experienced throws further light on the presence of this problem among our boys. Of the 40 per cent who said that they had religious doubts as a result of things which they had heard, 29.1 per cent stated that they experienced these doubts only "occasionally." However, 10.7 per cent of the boys indicate that these doubts "frequently" occur.

While the optimist might prefer to look at the 60 per cent who are free from the disintegrating effects that usually follow in the wake of doubts, it is a point of wisdom not to forget the 40 per cent for whom conflicting moral opinions constitute a source of religious doubts. Though it is not to our purpose here to suggest how these doubts may be handled, we do believe that a conscientious realization of the factual existence to the extent just mentioned of this unsettled state of mind will prompt a sympathetic understanding from the teacher, which will go far toward alleviating this problem among the adolescents concerned.

Adolescent's Attitude Toward the Sacraments

We now turn our attention to the boy's reaction to certain phases of the practical side of his religion, namely, Confession, Communion, and the Mass. In an effort to get his reactions to these principal means of supernatural help, we devised a series of questions which inquired into the extent to which he finds these channels of grace, particularly Confession, a source of help in dealing with his personal problems.

For the adolescent whose peace of mind, especially in his early teens, is frequently troubled by many a disconcerting problem, Confession should prove a real boon, a source of joy. The extent to which he fails to find it such can quite safely be regarded as the extent to which his problems of a religious nature go unsolved.

Attitude Toward Confession

We initiated our exploration of the boy's attitude toward the sacrament of Penance with the question, *Do you like to go to Confession?*

More than three out of five (62 per cent) answered point blank, "Yes." About one out of eight (13.1 per cent) answered just as definitely, "No." A freshman, who answered "No," adds by way of explanation, "I have a serious sin on my soul and I'm afraid to tell it in Confession for some reason I do not know." Not counting the two individuals who failed to respond, an additional 24.8 per cent modified their affirmative answer by replying, "Occasionally." Thus, out of 2000 boys, we have 1736 affirming that they like to go to Confession, as against 262 who say they do not like to go.

We pressed our inquiry further with the question, *Do you go to Confession because someone "tells you to go" (rather than because you yourself want to)?* To this, more than one out of four (26.3 per cent) replied in the affirmative, though less than one out of ten (9.7 per cent) said that this was "frequently" the case with them. The rest of this 26.3 per cent say they "occasionally" go because they are told to go, rather than because they want to go. This leaves us with more than seven out of ten (72.8 per cent) who go to Confession because they want to. These figures seem to indicate that the majority of our Catholic educators are succeeding in inculcating the habit of going to Confession in such a way that their charges will carry out this practice on their own initiative. But looking at these figures from the point of view of those who only rarely, if ever, go to Confession on their own initiative, our interpretation becomes far less optimistic. However, we must be chary of any conclusions from these figures, for we have no proof that the boy himself is not somewhat to blame for this lack of initiative.

Confession and the Solution of Problems

With one eighth of the boys having a dislike for going to Confession, and one tenth hardly ever going unless they are told, we might expect a similar number to tell us that Confession fails to help them in their personal difficulties. This expectation is borne out by the results received in response to our question, *Do you feel that Confession "definitely" helps you in dealing with your personal problems?* Happily, three out of four (74.5 per cent) answer with an unqualified "Yes." Fourteen per cent more say that Confession helps them "occasionally." But outside of the 1.4 per cent who refrained from any commitment, the remaining 10.1 per cent could not agree to having received any definite help from Confession in dealing with their personal difficulties. In fact, most of these latter (7.3 per cent) were quite pointed in this matter by answering with a definite "No."

Our findings do not prepare us to say just where the blame should be placed for this failure on the part of Confession to prove a help to the boy in the solution of his personal problems. A number of factors may be present. It may well be that the boy himself is to blame because he simply does not ask about his difficulties, and this for a

number of reasons; or he may be in too much of a rush when once inside the confessional. Whether this last-mentioned factor is a reason or not we do not know; but we inquired into the extent to which certain other factors hinder some adolescents from speaking about their difficulties in the confessional.

Reasons for Failure to Consult Priest

The first of the reasons we presented for the boy's consideration was, *Because you fear the priest knows you.* To this, 14.1 per cent replied that this reason "frequently" kept them back from asking the confessor about their difficulties; an additional 20.4 per cent affirmed that this reason "occasionally" functioned as a restraining factor. Some who answered thus added, "There should be a drape over the screen." Another explains, "I regard the priest as a man, even though I know I'm supposed to regard him as Christ's representative." A few more than half (58.2 per cent) replied that fear of the priest knowing them had never held them back from asking about their difficulties.

The second reason suggested, *Because you fear the conversation will be overheard,* drew a negative response from over three fourths (76 per cent) of the boys. However, 4.2 per cent affirmed that this reason was "frequently" the cause of their refraining from asking about certain difficulties, while an additional 8.2 per cent qualified their affirmative response with "occasionally."

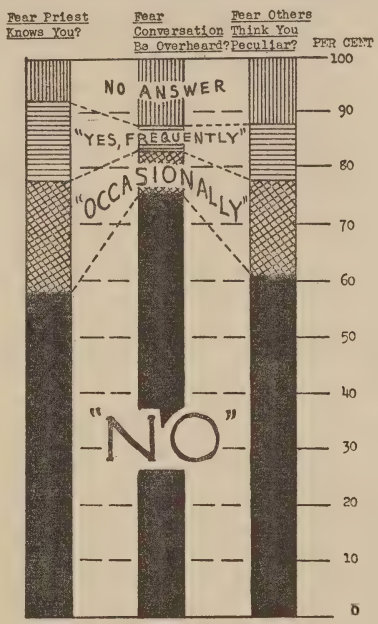

Figure 16. Certain factors restraining the adolescent in the confessional.

A third factor which we thought might exert an inhibiting force was drafted thus: *Because others may think you peculiar if you stay in too long.* Fitting in with the adolescent's sensitiveness to the opinions of others, we have more than one out of four (26.9 per cent) admitting that this consideration has kept them from asking about certain difficulties in their lives which they otherwise might have presented to their confessor for clarification. Almost one tenth of the boys say that this has been a matter of "frequent" occurrence with them, while one sixth say that this experience has only been "occa-

sional." But for roughly six out of ten (62.3 per cent) boys this consideration has had no inhibiting effect.

There can be no doubt that there are other influences restraining the boy from asking about his difficulties in the confessional. As a matter of fact, nearly 50 boys wrote in the margin that none of these reasons hindered them but that certain others did, and then proceeded to give their reason. The reasons more frequently mentioned follow:

Feel ashamed to ask.
I'm afraid to ask.
Lack the nerve — feel funny about it.
Fear being embarrassed because of a sin confessed.
Afraid he will remember this outside of the confessional.
Am afraid I may cause him to think less of me.
Personal embarrassment.
Don't know why, but just can't get myself around to it.

Thus it appears that embarrassment seems to be the dominant inhibiting factor in the above causes restraining the adolescent from opening up certain of his personal problems to his confessor.

Looking back over our figures, we note that over one third of the boys (34.5 per cent) stated that they refrained from asking about some of their difficulties in Confession because they feared the priest knew them. This was particularly the case in schools where the teachers were priests. In these schools particularly, a number of the boys pleaded that "some curtains ought to be put over the screen so the priest can't see you."

It is particularly noteworthy that less than one in eight boys refrained from speaking of his difficulties because of a fear that his conversation would be overheard. And only one out of twenty-five boys admits of this consideration "frequently" functioning in his life. This is another manifestation of the adolescent's frankness; he doesn't care if others do hear something about his troubles. But over one fourth admit having refrained from asking about their difficulties because of a fear of being thought peculiar if they stayed in the confessional too long. Again we see a characteristic of adolescence coming to the fore, namely, sensitiveness to the opinions of others.

Attitude Toward Communion

With Confession we naturally associate Holy Communion, and hence we next presented the question, *Do you like to go to Holy Communion?* Exactly nine out of ten boys say unqualifyingly that they do. An additional 8.4 per cent say they do but only "occasionally." Not counting the dozen who withheld their opinion, we are left with just ten out of 2000 who say they do not like to go to Holy Communion. It would have been interesting to follow up this question with a query regarding the frequency with which these boys actually went to Communion, but this information was not sought in our problemmaire.

How to Appreciate the Mass: a Problem

From a consideration of Holy Communion we proceed to a consideration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. All of us are acquainted with the apparent disinterest and apathy with which some of our adolescents assist at Mass. And those of us who have the privilege of associating more closely with them in outside activities have heard, at least on occasion, the remark, "Well, I don't get anything out of the Mass anyway." Shocking, perhaps, but it should not be, if we should pause to ask ourselves why it is that daily attendance at Mass falls off sharply when the boy passes from grade school to high school, and this even in parish high schools where there is an opportunity for daily attendance before school.

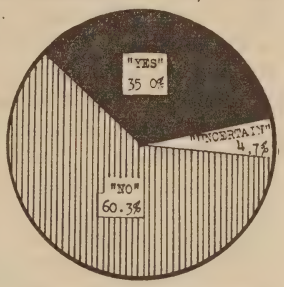

Figure 17. Appreciation of the Mass a problem?

Every high-school boy has heard over and over again that the Mass is our greatest treasure; but has he learned to appreciate the Mass? Does he consider a lack of appreciation of the Mass as one of his problems? We sought the answer to this query through the question, *Is "how to learn to appreciate the Mass" one of your problems?*

The responses received to this question indicate that while 60.3 per cent of the boys do not regard this as one of their problems, and while 4.7 per cent do not know whether it is or not, over one third of the boys (35 per cent) state definitely that how to learn to appreciate the Mass is one of their problems. (See Fig. 17.) Many of this number would agree with the lad who wrote, "I have been trying for three years to get myself interested in the Mass, but I cannot. I just go because I have to. Yet when you read the lives of holy people you find out that they loved to go to Mass." Evidently this student is puzzled.

Thus, our findings indicate that more than one out of every three boys in our Catholic high schools feels that he does not appreciate the Mass the way he would like to, and further that he does not know how to develop a better appreciation of the Mass. Does this mean that the manner in which the Sacrifice of the Mass is taught in our high schools is inadequate, or at least unsuited to one third of our adolescents? Is the present manner of treatment too superficial or unpractical? Any other interpretation would seem to have the appearance of a shying away from a rather pointed accusation.

If the Sacrifice of the Mass is to be the center of Christian worship, we must develop in our adolescents an adequate appreciation, not only of the value of the Holy Sacrifice and the many motives for the frequent offering of the Mass, but we must likewise give them a practi-

cal insight into the intelligent manner of co-offering the Sacrifice with the priest. It has been the writer's experience that the stressing of the "we" idea of the Mass, the fact that the person who properly offers up the Mass is actually a copriest offering the Holy Sacrifice, makes a powerful and effective appeal to adolescents. Unfortunately, this manner of presenting the offering of the Mass seems to be little in vogue in the schools with which the writer has come in contact in making this study.

This manner of presentation appeals because the adolescent of today loves action. He wants to be up and doing; he prefers active participation to the role of dawdling spectator. In religious devotions as in sports activities the boy wants to take an active part. This may be because he is unaccustomed to the role of observer; besides, that which employs both his body and his mind is easier for him than that which calls merely for the application of the latter. As Abbé Dibildos points out, "the youth of our day is, above all, a youth of action, and in his religious life there is far more action than theoretical thinking."[7]

This latter point must be borne in mind in developing the religious extracurricular activities of the school. Opportunities must be provided the adolescent to express his "new-found" religion. A boy who appreciates his religion wants to carry it out in action. A new zeal takes hold of him; nothing seems impossible. The vague ideal in the back of his mind is nothing short of reforming the world. New motives with a deeper appeal drive him onward. New and deeper meanings, because of their novel freshness, thrust themselves upon his mind with such an impact that they are well-nigh overwhelming. He yearns to share them with others. Generosity hits a new high. It is the golden opportunity for teachers of youth cognizant of this awakening of religious zeal.

But, should the church and school fail to provide channels of activities into which this youthful zeal may flow, not only is a rare opportunity missed to train future Catholic laymen in Catholic Action, but harm is done the adolescent in thwarting an ambition which has every right to be satisfied.

Adolescent Zeal and Catholic Action

Being interested in the extent to which this youthful zeal for Catholic Action is actually provided with an outlet by our parishes and Catholic high schools, we devised the two questions: *Do you think your school offers you sufficient opportunities for personally engaging in Catholic Action activities? Do you think your parish offers you sufficient opportunities for personally engaging in Catholic Action activities?*

[7] Abbé Dibildos, *Une Education Chrétienne en Pleine Vie* (Paris: Bland and Gay, 1927), 156.

Replies to these questions indicate that 81.1 per cent are satisfied with the opportunities for Catholic Action activities which their school gives them. Only 68.4 per cent find their parishes satisfactory in this matter. But about one seventh (15.1 per cent) say that their school does not offer them sufficient opportunities for personally engaging in these activities, and more than one out of every four (27.5 per cent) lodges this complaint against his parish. The rest of the boys were doubtful as to whether such opportunities as were offered were sufficient or not.

In grouping the replies to these two questions according to class in high school, we note that twice as many seniors as freshmen feel dissatisfied with the opportunities for Catholic Action activities presented by the school. We likewise observe a similar difference between the first- and fourth-year men in regard to dissatisfaction with opportunities presented by the parish. (See Fig. 18.)

It is further noted that the growth in the number who feel this dissatisfaction is gradual and quite regular as we proceed upward through the high school. The fact that this is true, both with regard to the opportunities offered by the high school as well as those offered

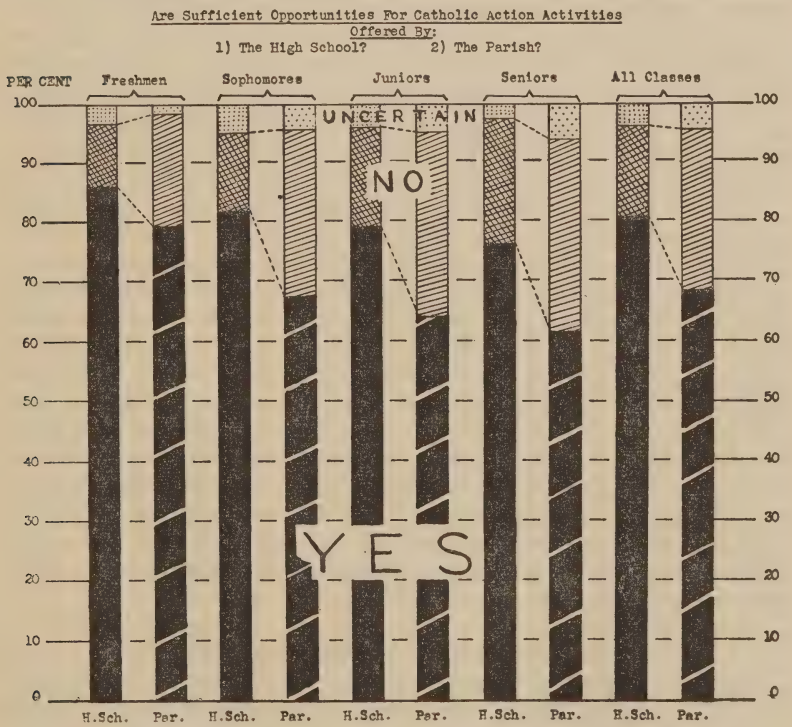

Figure 18. The adolescents' appraisal of opportunities for Catholic Action.

by the parish, would seem to indicate that this reaction as manifested in a thwarting of a desire to participate is due to changes going on within the adolescent himself rather than to any actual difference in the opportunities presented to the different high-school groups. The opportunities for engaging in Catholic Action activities are probably as great for the senior as they are for the freshman. However, because of an increased desire for such activities, the senior feels more keenly the lack of such opportunities when they are not present. As mentioned above, this is partially due to the expansion of his intellectual and emotional powers. Intensifying this urge for activity are certain altruistic motives. By the time the boy reaches seventeen he is beginning to experience the desire for social service. According to Pringle, the period beginning at this age is "pre-eminently the age of cooperation."[8] The adolescent desires to feel himself a part of a cooperating group of equals. He wants to practice leadership, at least on a small scale. He craves responsibilities which have a maturing effect on him. He hungers for that sense of achievement issuing from active participation which assures him he is definitely on the way to manhood.

Then, too, it is at this time that the most rapid advances are made toward a real inner interpretation of duty, in which duty is recognized and accepted as carrying its own credentials apart from any need of external sanction. Hence the teen-age boy begins to sense a new allegiance to his Church and to his country. It is these promptings of the adolescent nature, together with the deeper appreciation of religious values, which we are tapping when we inquire into the adolescent's desire for opportunities of Catholic Action.

In a word, then, the majority of our adolescents are willing to dedicate their strength and consecrate their energies to the cause of their religion, which, within their recently expanding years, has taken on a more attractive and deeper appeal. This newly awakened zeal flashes through the remark of the junior who asks, "What can I do to help check communism, and how can I combat crooked politics?" Our Catholic youth in America are standing on tiptoe, ready to advance at the word "Go." If they are not advancing nor achieving the great things that youth of certain other countries are achieving, may it not be that some of us, their leaders, fail to recognize the full measure of their apostolic zeal? With over one fourth of the adolescents in our Catholic high schools stating that their parishes do not offer them sufficient opportunities for exercising this zeal, and with one out of seven lodging this same complaint against our Catholic high schools, can we entirely escape this accusation?

Biggest Problem in Adolescent School Life

Before closing this section on the problems of the adolescent in his school life, we present the answers to a summary question in which

[8] *Adolescence and High School Problems*, 38.

we asked the boy to appraise all the problems in his school life and tell us which puzzled him most. At the same time he was instructed to write the word "None" if his difficulties or problems were not serious enough so as to puzzle him. In this section we have considered the problems of the adolescent that lie within the general area of his school life. We have examined the answers of 2000 high-school boys to definite questions on specific problems or problem-prompting circumstances. In the present question the adolescent was asked to select the problem in his school life that puzzled him most, i.e., if he felt he had any problem that was that serious.

In answering this question, somewhat more than half of the boys said that they either experienced no such problem in their school life or that none of their school problems were so grave as to puzzle them. But about half of the boys experienced problems in their school life which they felt were rather puzzling.

Topping the list of these problems are those growing out of difficulties with various school subjects. More than one out of every ten mentions such difficulties as his most puzzling problem. Upwards of two thirds of those who mention this as their principal problem complain of difficulties with Latin and mathematics. Typical of such complaints is that of the freshman who says, "I can't seem to catch on to algebra no matter how hard I try," and that of the sophomore who adds, "Why do I have to take Latin? Why not a subject that will do me some good later on? I can't get interested in it." Problems growing out of difficulties in science subjects follow next, with physics and chemistry sharing equally in frequency of mention. Typical is the remark, "Physics is still a mystery to me."

Second on the list of problems which these high-school adolescents mention as their most puzzling are those centering about difficulties experienced in studying. Boys complain of being unable to concentrate, of not knowing how to study, of being slow in "catching on," of having difficulty in grasping fundamentals, of finding it hard to get a good foundation. One senior puts it this way, "How can I get my mind down on my studies and stop thinking about pleasures?" Another explains, "I don't seem to grasp things as quickly as others, but what gets me is that the teacher goes right on with the smart ones." A junior asks, "Why can't I be as smart as other boys?"

Third in frequency of mention are those problems associated with high and low grades. The most puzzling problem in the school life of many a boy is how he is going to get a passing grade in one or more of his subjects. His fear of failure is a veritable sword of Damocles. Some say that they fear low marks because of their parents' storming reaction to low grades. A freshman queries, "How am I ever going to pass? If I could only get a passing grade, it's always on my mind. And if I don't, it's the razor strap for me when I get home."

On the other hand, an almost equal number who desire high grades

and honors become puzzled over the matter when such are not forthcoming. Typical of these is the sophomore who asks, "Why is it that though I study more than some boys, I cannot get as good grades as they?"

Next in rank among the problems which boys mention as puzzling them most are those that grow out of teacher-student relations. While problems in this field are quite varied, a rather large number mention injustice on the part of teachers in marking, but particularly the type of injustice resulting from teachers having "pets." In the answers to an earlier question in our problemmaire, and at this point likewise, the boys wax acrimonious in their remarks on this subject. Relative to this point one senior adds, "My biggest problem is refraining from telling the teacher what I think of his having 'pets.'" Others consider their biggest problem to be a dislike for one or more of their teachers. Some mention as the cause of this the fact that some of their teachers are "poor explainers." Still others regard their feeling of not being understood by their teachers, of their teachers' failure to appreciate their attitude and effort as their most puzzling problem. One such says, "My biggest difficulty is convincing the teacher that I am what I am."

Five per cent of the boys say their most puzzling problem consists of their inability to do their homework, and this for a number of reasons: either because they don't know how to do it, they feel they have too much of it, they don't have time enough to do it, or they have difficulty in "getting down" to it. A few say their problem consists in their having no place to do it. Among these there is the frequent refrain, "Why do they have to give us so much homework?"

Sixth in rank among the problems in school life which boys consider most puzzling are those dealing with the boy's social relations in and about the school. How to be popular with their classmates is the concern of many whose problem falls in this field. A senior asks, "How can I make friends and get good marks at the same time?" Another, "What can I do to be on a social par with my fellow students?"

A somewhat different problem is reflected in the remark of the senior who says, "I am puzzled over the ever present fact that I have no girl." A sophomore feels his principal school problem is not knowing "how to get to know the other boys and girls," while a junior adds, "I am frequently worried whether the fellows think I am conceited."

The above problems were the principal ones mentioned by the boys as those which they felt puzzled them most. Others mention as their most puzzling problem the fact that they are not interested in their schoolwork. Many of these add, "I simply can't get interested in it." Others say that they have too much work to do after school, that their problem consists in their having to take courses which they

cannot see why they have to take. Still others say that their problem lies in their inability to participate in certain extracurricular activities. Other problems of still less frequent mention hinged on finances, vocational indecision, inability to get certain high-school courses desired, inability to keep up schoolwork and social activities, and conduct difficulties.

When we consider the incidence of these problems in the four high-school groups separately, we note a definite tendency for freshmen to be relatively free from most of the school difficulties mentioned above; in general, the incidence of these problems increases with each succeeding year in school. This trend is particularly true of those difficulties which lie in the realm of teacher-student relationships and of those problems concerned with the adolescent's social relations in the school. In this latter field more seniors than any other group find their most puzzling problem.

Contrary to this general trend is the number of freshmen and sophomores who say their most puzzling problem is their inability to "get" Latin and mathematics. This is particularly true of the sophomores. That fewer upperclassmen mention difficulties in this field may be explained by the fact that after the sophomore year those who do have difficulties in these subjects usually drop these in favor of other subjects which they may elect. It is likewise noteworthy that of those who say they have no school problem so serious as to puzzle them, freshmen rank the highest. Sophomore, junior, and senior groups follow in order, each with a decreased number saying that they are free from such a problem.

While we have examined in this and the three preceding chapters a host of problems which adolescents experience in their high-school life, still, the results we have just considered lend an optimistic view to our findings; fully one half of the students admit that they do not feel they have any problems in their school life so grave as to be puzzled by them. And for the other half who do experience such problems, the majority of their difficulties are of such a nature that they can be alleviated by a reorganization of our curricular offerings together with a more sympathetic and understanding treatment of the adolescent and his needs.

IV

PROBLEMS OF THE BOY IN SOCIAL LIFE

Chapter 11

PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT

Along with the home, the church, and the school goes another force which exerts an influence on the developing character of the adolescent, namely, his social environment. This last, like the other agencies, has an educational role to play in bringing the boy to a fuller realization of his expanding powers. As Pope Pius XI affirmed in his *Encyclical on the Christian Education of Youth,* "Education is essentially a social and not a mere individual activity."[1]

By nature, man is a social being. He reaches the fullest development of his nature only with the benefit of society. Hence, much of his education must come by way of the experiences he gathers through his associations in society. The formal teaching of the school is only part of his education. He takes what he wants of it and leaves the rest unassimilated. The home, too, is limited in its contribution. He needs the association of his fellows to develop his social tendencies and to bring him to his fullest stature as a man.

The principal purpose, therefore, of activities in the boy's social life is to aid in the fuller development of his personality and at the same time to give him the satisfactions which his nature at this period of his development craves, especially because of the stepped-up unfolding of the social side of his "self."

Changes in the Social Nature of the Adolescent

At adolescence, beside the physical changes manifest in an increase of height and weight, and the broadening and intensifying of the intellectual interests, there appear rapid emotional changes springing forth in a new and fervid emotional life which plunges the adolescent into a search for wider and wider social horizons.

At this time, the boy feels life opening up very fast: so many new and strange aspects of things swing into view, so many opportunities, so many possibilities for pleasure and social contact that the very thought of them sends a thrill tingling through his whole being. He experiences such vibrant emotions that he is somewhat benumbed at times. These cataclysmic spells in which the social side of his nature expands have their natural repercussions in a feeling of confusion and uncertainty. The adolescent's emotional development has been too

[1] (Washington, D. C.: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1930), 6.

fast to give him a chance to "see things through." He has caught a glimpse of the general outlines in the social picture but has not had time to study the details. He has experienced a promise but he does not know precisely of what. He begins to feel new relations to the world of persons. As a result, he becomes conscious of a strengthened desire for more social experiences; he craves an environment in which he is surrounded by boys and girls of his own age; he becomes a seeker of enjoyment, especially of those pleasures common to his peers; his whole nature craves for companionship. Hence adolescence is a period when ardent personal friendships are formed.

Perhaps no other phenomena of adolescence are more interesting and striking than the changes that take place in the youth's social attitudes and tendencies. G. Stanley Hall believed that no part of adolescent nature undergoes more characteristic developments than does the social nature.[2] But these changes are not entirely automatic. Opportunities must be provided the adolescent to facilitate this process of socialization. Family ties must be broken. This process is not easy. Not only must the adolescent's need of his family be broken through but the family's need of him as well. He must grow out of his parents' lives into his own. He must find his own place in an enlarged social environment.

It is true, the boy is not suddenly thrown into adult society, for he has been marching along the path of transition for several years; but now his steps lengthen into giant strides. Unless sufficient opportunities for social companionship are available, problems of adjustment are liable to prove overwhelming. Like any other pattern of conduct, his manner of acting in his new environment must be learned, and "learning," as Chesterton says, "makes a bloody entrance at every stage of the process." Learning the social techniques of getting along with others proves no exception.

If the adolescent could meet the problems consequent upon his attempts to adjust himself to his ever widening social group with the poise and nonchalance that were his when he was ten, many of his difficulties in this field would be absent or reduced to a minimum. But because of the physical changes going on within his own body and the consequent emotional reactions which make him awkwardly self-conscious, this problem of finding himself and of securing his place among his fellows often proves quite trying. For this reason, many an adolescent is averse to meeting the guests of the family. For the same reason, many an adolescent will walk blocks out of his way to avoid meeting the one in the world he most desires to see. This, too, partially explains why some adolescents withdraw into themselves, avoiding every stranger for fear their poor adjustment in social situations will be exposed. Of all the phases of adolescent adjustment,

[2] *Adolescence* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1928), II, 363.

it is this phase of the adolescent's adjustment to his expanding social environment that may prove the most difficult if he is at all inclined to be introverted. As Mandel Sherman points out, anxiety over social relations among adolescents is relatively frequent because problems are more numerous and frustrations in social adaptation greater than the adolescent has ever experienced in any previous period. The physical and psychological reorientation which he must undergo in adjusting himself to adult modes of behavior touch his sense of security most closely.[3] He wonders how well he is being received and particularly so since he wants so much to be "grown up." He hungers for praise of others, yet is acutely sensitive to disparagement and abnormally fearful of ridicule. This anxiousness about his role in social groups naturally makes him painfully sensitive to the opinion of others about him. So concerned is he that when passing a group conversing in a half-audible tone he wonders whether or not they are talking about him.

That problems centering about the adolescent's adjustment to social situations are quite prevalent is evidenced by Ruth Strang's study of 5000 problems reported by students in which she found that social problems constituted one fourth of all problems reported.[4] O'Brien, in a somewhat limited investigation, found that of the first six types of adolescent problems according to frequency of mention, four types fell in the field of the adolescent's social life.[5] And Pressey in his study of the prevalence of problems among adolescents found that 53 per cent of his subjects had social problems while 32 per cent regarded these problems as serious; social problems ranked third among types of problems regarded as grave.[6]

In the preceding chapter we saw how among problems in the boy's school life which he considered most puzzling, the social difficulties of getting along with his school companions were fifth in frequency of mention. In the present section we shall examine in detail the problems of social adjustment which the boy experiences, not only in the limited field of his social relations in school but in the wider area of extrafamilial relations. Hence the questions which we are about to consider have as their purpose to acquaint us better with the problems of the boy in his relations with his companions and in his reactions to social situations as they vary with the interplay of subjective and objective factors.

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[3] Mandel Sherman, *Mental Hygiene and Education,* 209–210.

[4] "Personal Problems of Students," National Association of Deans of Women *Yearbook,* 16 (1929), 147–151.

[5] Irene O'Brien, "Problems of High School Students," *Child Welfare,* 25 (1931), 427–428.

[6] S. L. Pressey, "The College and Adolescent Needs," in *Research Adventures in University Teaching* (Bloomington, Ill.: Public School Publishing Co., 1927), 81–85.

The Difficulty of "Getting Along" With Others

To what extent are the problems of adjustment to which we referred above prevalent among normal high-school adolescents? We find a partial answer and an indication of the extent to which the boy finds difficulty in mixing socially in the responses to our first question in this field, *Do you find difficulty in making friends and "getting along" easily with others?*

While nearly seven out of ten (69.5 per cent) do not experience any difficulty in this phase of their social life, three out of every ten (30.4 per cent) do, at least on occasion. For 7.2 per cent of the boys the adjustments involved in making friends and getting along easily with others seem to be too much for them, for they respond to the above question with "Yes, frequently." Many of these do not put the blame on themselves but on their associates. Such is the senior who complains, "I simply can't get my friends to understand me." For these, social relations are a bore and something to be avoided. Not only that, but their whole life is made more tense and dissatisfying. As Douglas Thom points out, "If the adolescent is without intimate contacts, no one with whom to share the joys and sorrows of life, it is nothing short of calamity."[7] For, with the realization of being friendless comes the conviction sooner or later that one does not possess the ability to make friends and hence the individual begins to regard efforts in this direction as a loss of time.

Not all adolescents who experience difficulties in making friends react in this manner. Some, instead of becoming introverted, become annoyingly extroverted. They feel they must do something to command the attention of their associates as a means of making themselves wanted. Hence, they become boastful, egoistic, and self-sufficient. This naturally renders them less acceptable and they become quarrelsome, haughty, antisocial, and selfish. Adults are too liable to interpret this conduct as evidence of deep-seated feelings of superiority, while actually it springs from a painful sense of inadequacy in social situations.[8] The understanding adult, on the other hand, will realize that it is expecting a great deal from a boy who is suffering from an awareness of social insecurity to lose himself in the interests of others. It is almost inevitable that, as he becomes more aware of the precarious position of his own ego, he should tighten his own defenses for its protection.[9] Had he more definite status and a sense of "belonging" in a vital social group, he might not manifest the above unsocial conduct.

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[7] *Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems*, 205.

[8] E. R. Groves, *Personality and Social Adjustment* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1925), 76.

[9] H. S. Dimock, *Rediscovering the Adolescent* (New York: Association Press, 1937), 140.

Fortunately, such difficulties are not found in the lives of a very large majority of our normal adolescents.

Feeling of Being Different

Somewhat related to the problem of difficulties in making friends, but more as a contributing factor toward this inadequate social adjustment, is the feeling of having different interests from those of others. It is quite possible for individuals to have different interests and yet be close friends, but if the individual frequently has this feeling of a difference of interests it may have an influence on his social relations and may even become a puzzling problem. To learn of the extent of this experience in the life of the adolescent boy we asked him, *Do you frequently feel that the things you are interested in are quite different from those others are interested in?*

In interpreting our findings we must be mindful of the characteristic changeableness of the adolescent. He may feel that his interests are different today, but tomorrow, because of his having come upon a satisfying relationship, he may feel just the opposite, but these findings do give us a cross-section view of the presence of the feeling of difference, as far as interests are concerned, in the normal adolescents in our high schools.

To this question, then, *Do you frequently feel that the things you are interested in are quite different from those others are interested in?* 48.5 per cent of the boys replied in the negative, 43.3 per cent in the affirmative, and 7.7 per cent were doubtful, leaving .5 per cent who failed to respond. Since our question inquired only into the extent to which the adolescent *frequently* experienced a difference of interests that were *quite different,* it would seem that those who answered in the affirmative, more than four out of every ten, by so replying, give some indication of inadequate adjustments in their social environment and hence experience a problem of at least minor significance in this phase of their life. There is some evidence that this feeling of difference may be interpreted as indicating the degree of personal integration which the individual has achieved.[10]

A sophomore who feels quite strongly that his interests are different from those of his companions adds the complaint:

> Why must other boys think one is a "sissy" because he enjoys fine music, good drama, and usually does not use bad language and the like? Most boys, I think, who live near or on the other side of the railroad tracks do not try to improve themselves because they think they are happy in living the miserable way they do. If only youth could enjoy the music of Chopin, Beethoven, Paderewski, and others instead of listening to music that came from the jungle, and will, I hope, return to it!

Far more common, however, is the complaint: "Those I go with just don't like the things I like." Back of this is perhaps the boy's own

[10] H. S. Dimock, *op. cit.*, 87–88.

lack of socialization; he has not yet learned to become interested in the likes of others.

Loneliness in the Life of the Adolescent

Akin to a feeling of having different interests and of being poorly adjusted to others is a feeling of loneliness, an emotional difficulty rather frequently experienced by the adolescent boy. It is easy for him to develop the impression that no one cares for him, to feel that there is no one to whom he can go to talk things over, no one to whom he can confide his real or imaginary worries. And when adults, especially parents, nag at him and criticize him, he is readily confirmed in this feeling of loneliness and its accompanying feeling of insecurity.

Of course, there is no doubt that an adolescent can be somewhat of a nuisance about the home; yet, no one realizes better than the boy himself that he is clumsy, awkward, and bothersome. But indiscriminate faultfinding on the part of parents will only serve to drive him deeper into this emotional difficulty which Healy found to be one of the most prolific causes of further emotional disturbances in young people.[11] To see to what extent normal adolescents experience this difficulty, we asked the question, *Are you ever bothered by feelings of loneliness?* and then followed it up with, *If so, what do you think are the causes?*

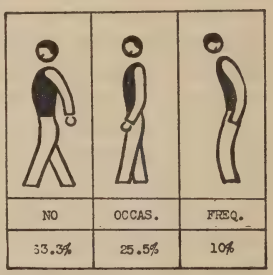

Figure 19. Loneliness, a problem?

Our findings show that loneliness does not seem to be much of a problem for the majority (63.3 per cent) of our adolescents, but it does exist for more than one third of them (35.5 per cent). One out of every ten state that it is a problem of frequent occurrence. (See Fig. 19.)

In studying the prevalence of this problem among the various groups within the high school, we note a definite and consistent trend for more and more boys to complain of this problem as we advance upward through the school. Hence, the freshmen are found to have the smallest number who have been bothered by feelings of loneliness and the largest number who are free from this difficulty, while the seniors have the largest number who admit having this problem and the smallest number who say they are rarely if ever bothered with this difficulty.

Causes of Loneliness

What are the causes of this emotional problem? The 35.5 per cent

[11] William Healy, *The Individual Delinquent* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1918), 357.

who are the victims of this difficulty give us a rather detailed answer in Table 18.

TABLE 18. Causes of Loneliness as Given by 710 Boys Who Are Subject to This Reaction at Least Occasionally

Rank	*Cause*	*Frequency of mention*
1.	Lack of friends	281
	Lack of friends and intimate companions	*110*
	Too few in the neighborhood, nobody around to play with	*66*
	No one to associate with in the home, no sisters or brothers	*44*
	Lack of a girl friend	*36*
	Being away from a particular person	*25*
2.	Nothing to do, no place to go	91
3.	Lack of freedom and social opportunities; too strict in the home	61
4.	Poor personality, self-conscious, shy, timid, inferiority complex	51
5.	Fall out with someone; loss of a friend	34
6.	Unpopular, shunned by others	31
7.	Being away from home	30
8.	Don't go out enough	29
9.	Difficulties with girl friend; lovesick; broken date	22
10.	Absence of a parent or dear one because of death	22
11.	Lack of finances	19
12.	Feel I'm different from others; different interests	16
13.	My tendency to like to be alone too much	16
14.	Impure habit; sin; wrongdoing	13
15.	Lack of social techniques, poor mixer	12
	Don't know; that's what I would like to know; wish I knew	41
	Miscellaneous: not being understood, moody, think others are against me, poor in sports, bad temper, no leisure time, lack of a confidant, feel slighted, school worries, too much on my mind, illness, hurt feelings, self-pity, disloyalty of friends, reaction from excitement, my problems, disappointment with worldly pleasures	76

An analysis of this table reveals two principal causes of loneliness, but no one would say that they would not be expected, namely, a "lack of friends" and "nothing to do." In fact, half of the reasons advanced can be summarized under these two heads. Making up the bulk of the other reasons given, we find a lack of freedom due to strictness in the home, personality difficulties, difficulties in social relations, and unpopularity. Then there are a number, particularly among the older boys, who do not know why this feeling of loneliness comes upon them. Many of these remark, "That's just what I'd like to know."

Of those who gave the reason, "too few in the neighborhood, nobody around to play with," almost all were underclassmen with the majority being freshmen. Those who advanced "personality difficulties" as a cause of loneliness were, on the other hand, almost without exception upperclassmen.

It is interesting to note the relatively large number who felt they had no one to associate with in the home. Not all of these are from one-child marriages either, though a fair number of these do complain rather bitterly about not having any brothers or sisters. Such is the complaint of the freshman who asks, "Why can't I have a little brother like so many of my friends have?" While another puts it rather emphatically, "I want a brother or at least a sister!" Another explains, "I have to stay at home, have no associations with friends, and have no sisters or brothers to talk to." Still another, while not an only child, experiences almost the same difficulties: "My brothers are too young and my sisters too old, so how can I have any fun?" This last remark comes from a freshman.

To give the reader a further sampling of the individuality of some of the boys' reasons for feeling lonely, we present the following random sampling.

I'm possessed with the idea that nobody pays any attention to me.
Don't get a chance to make friends.
There is no "pep" in our home, that's why I feel so lonely and wearisome when at home.
I need a companion who really understands me.
Lack of a good mother to help and understand me.
No friends and nothing to do but brood over my misfortune.
I'm an only child with a very busy father.
I wish my dad was more of a "dad."
I feel nobody cares for me.
Not allowed to associate with boys in my neighborhood.
No money to take my girl friend out.
Death of my mother; I get lonely and cry over it, I can't seem to enjoy anything without her.

Thus, it would seem that the majority who mentioned the problem of loneliness have experienced rather deep feelings in this regard. Furthermore, those who have mentioned this difficulty have done so mainly because they feel rather pointedly the deprivation of not having someone near them. This emphasizes the fact that the adolescent has a definite need for the satisfactions derived from social contacts.

Few adolescents, however, are aware of what is perhaps the underlying cause of all the causes which they advanced as reasons for their loneliness. As Allers explains, "with the complete discovery and crystallization of the ego, man awakens to the consciousness of his unavoidable, ultimate loneliness, his final dependence upon himself, and therewith of his absolute responsibility toward himself."[12] The protection which the adolescent enjoyed as a child is gone forever. He feels the absence of this protection without as yet having attained that degree or equanimity and assurance which will enable him to stand really alone. Hence, the real cause of loneliness in the adolescent

[12] Rudolph Allers, *The Psychology of Character,* 274.

lies much deeper than he realizes and is far more cryptic than the circumstantial causes he complains of above. Looking at loneliness from this point of view, we readily realize that this feeling cannot be abolished entirely but only to the extent that the individual leads a supernatural life.

Awkwardness, a Conscious Problem for the Boy

Among other possible factors which may be a source of difficulties for the adolescent in his struggle to attain group status is the problem of feeling out of place because of a feeling of awkwardness. Much has been written in the literature on adolescence about the awkwardness of the growing boy and how his lack of co-ordination causes him to shun society because of the embarrassment that is likely to follow upon his attempts at performing the social graces.

To what extent is awkwardness a problem of the adolescent of high-school age? We sought our answer through the following two questions, *Have you frequently felt out of place because of a feeling of awkwardness?* and *Have you shunned others because of this?* Our first query brought a positive reply from nearly six out of every ten boys (58.1 per cent), while somewhat more than one out of three (35.3 per cent) said he had not had such an experience, at least not frequently.

In studying the incidence of this problem on the different levels within the high school, we note a definite tendency for more and more boys to experience this difficulty up to and including the third year in high school where its presence reaches a peak. In the final year the prevalence of this problem falls to its lowest level, though it is still a factor in the lives of over half of the fourth-year boys. The following table brings out this trend quite clearly.

TABLE 19. Percentage of Adolescents on the Various High-School Levels Who *Frequently* Feel Out of Place Because of a Feeling of Awkwardness

Have you frequently felt out of place because of a feeling of awkwardness?	*Freshmen*	*Sophomores*	*Juniors*	*Seniors*	*All classes*
Yes	56.0%	60.0%	62.2%	54.2%	58.1%
No	36.0	34.6	31.8	38.8	35.3
Doubtful	8.0	5.0	5.6	6.8	6.4
No answer	.0	.4	.4	.2	.2

It is to be noted that the problem of feeling out of place because of a feeling of awkwardness exists on all levels among more than half of the boys, but it is most common among students in the middle years of high school. This may be explained by the fact that the

growth spurt often occurs during these years. And, as Dimock explains, "awkwardness in adolescents is more likely to accompany the rather sudden beginnings of growth in the pubescent period than the later and more rapid growth."[13] In a study of muscle co-ordination of adolescents, he found that the period of transition from prepuberty to puberty was the most crucial in its influence on motor control, for it was at this period that the reduction in the rate of increase of motor ability was greatest.[14]

Why So Clumsy?

As this period of accelerated physical growth and change is ushered in, the psychomotor gracefulness of childhood vanishes. At the same time the smooth co-ordination of the adult remains in abeyance because of the rapidity of change not permitting the establishing of a fixed rhythm. With the exception of the prenatal period, at no time in the life of the individual is physical growth so rapid. Between the ages of twelve and seventeen the increase in weight is equivalent to that of the entire ten years previous. The increase in height is only slightly less rapid. During this period a boy may gain as much as six inches in height and twenty-five pounds in weight in a single year.[15] So intense and rapid is the physical development that his physical structure is carried away beyond what his general control mechanisms are able to sustain without evidence of too much strain which shows itself not only in poor co-ordination but likewise sometimes in stammering, tics, general bodily fatigue, self-consciousness, and feelings of inferiority. Of these latter symptoms we shall speak later.

Most adults fail to understand that the adolescent's task of gaining control over the rapid changes going on in his body is most bewildering to him. As our findings indicate, six out of every ten have frequently felt out of place because of awkwardness, and of these, three out of every five have found the experience so severe as to cause them to shun the company of others.

Even in the matter of the adolescent's consciousness of himself as a physical being, the changes going on within him are so rapid and puzzling that "he does not know overnight what he will be like when he wakes up in the morning."[16] This uncertainty, born of maladjustments, produces insecurity which in turn further increases the poor physical adjustments characteristic of adolescent awkwardness. And hence we have a vicious circle which may lead to neurotic difficulties unless the adolescent is given the proper attitude toward these temporary problems.

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[13] H. S. Dimock, *Rediscovering the Adolescent*, 249.
[14] *Ibid.*, 246–247.
[15] *Ibid.*, 241–250.
[16] Rudolph Allers, *op. cit.*, 270.

A few years previously the adolescent was a well-stabilized individual. He had become used to his size and knew what he could and could not do with his body. Now rather suddenly he finds himself knocking over things when he reaches for them. His longer legs bring him to objects in an unexpectedly short time. When he comes across the room to shake hands he nearly runs you down.

His muscles and bones have grown at such a pace that they have outstripped his control over them. Hence his clumsiness at anything that involves the use of the finer muscles of fingers, throat, and lips, or the finer co-ordinations involved in dancing and skating. For this reason he is likely to be extremely sensitive of appearing in public.

The disproportionate size of his feet, hands, and nose also cause sensitive feelings. Many a disconsolate adolescent has spent hours looking in a mirror at his big ears or oversized nose, not realizing that in a few years the growth of the rest of his face will bring back the proportionate contours he once admired.

While the adult may be amused at the peculiarities of conduct consequent upon the adolescent's realization of these changes within him, he must nevertheless realize that what the adolescent needs most of all at this period is an understanding of himself. If the boy is despondent over his angularity, self-conscious of his skin eruptions, anxious over changes in his circulation, it is for the adult to give him a wholesome attitude toward these temporary inconveniences. The adolescent must be led to understand that these problems of his are only temporary and that they are not nearly so noticeable to others as they are to himself;[17] that their underlying cause is a lack of harmonious development of the body which every boy experiences, which is natural and hence nothing to worry about.

Avoidance of Others

Though we alluded above to the number who shun others because of these feelings of awkwardness, we now present in graphic form our findings on this problem, listing the data according to the various levels within the high school.

Thus, three out of every five (58.3 per cent) who in answer to the previous question said that they frequently experience a feeling of awkwardness admit that they have shunned others at least on occasion because of this feeling. But only one out of every five finds himself so self-conscious of this feeling of awkwardness that he frequently avoids the company of others because of it.

The ratio of those who avoid, at least on occasions, associating with others because of a feeling of awkwardness, climbs from four out of ten among the freshmen to seven out of ten among the seniors. And when we consider those who have frequently shunned others because

[17] Raphael McCarthy, S.J., *Training the Adolescent* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1934), 61.

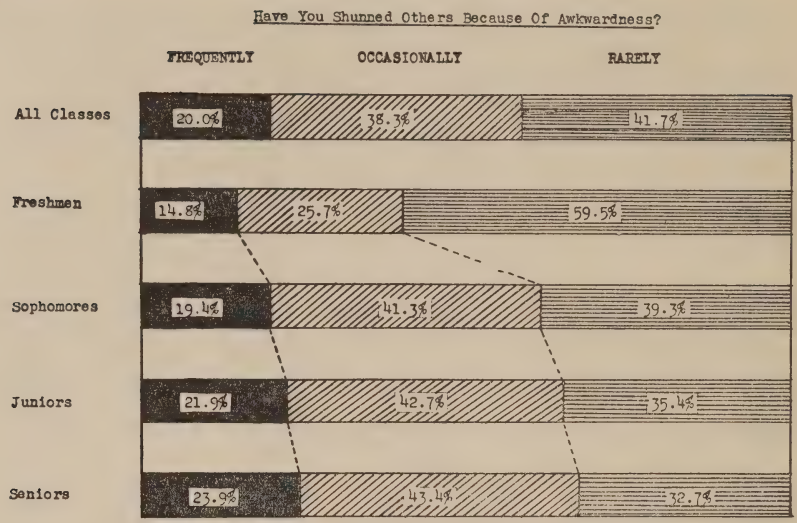

Figure 20. Gravity of the problem of awkwardness.

of this problem, we note a jump from 14.8 per cent among the freshmen to 23.9 per cent among the seniors. (See Fig. 20.)

These findings seem to lend themselves to no other interpretation than that the consciousness of being awkward makes itself felt more and more severely as the adolescent grows older, at least up to and including the time when he begins his final year in high school.

The number of seniors who mentioned that they frequently experienced feelings of awkwardness is smaller than the number of students in any other high-school group who mention the same. Yet those seniors who mention that they have this problem are more sensitive to it than those on any other level within the school. This fact is evident in the above graph which shows that the seniors have a higher percentage than any other group saying that they have frequently shunned others because of this difficulty.

Other factors besides the feeling of awkwardness are likewise involved. The social activities in which the adolescent participates become more numerous, more differentiated, more complicated as he grows older. Then, too, his understanding of the consequences of a possible *faux pas* becomes more refined.

Shyness and Its Underlying Causes

Related to the problem of awkwardness is the problem of shyness or bashfulness. Awkwardness may cause an adolescent to become shy. We noted above how six out of every ten who felt awkward were led to shun others because of their self-consciousness in this regard.

But awkwardness figures only as a contributing cause in so far as it is a partial product of the same root cause underlying shyness, namely, a temporarily overdeveloped self-consciousness in the adolescent. To understand this problem in the boy we must understand why it is that he is so self-conscious. We must remember that it is at this time that the unfolding of his ego is making him ever more aware that he is a person distinct and apart, an individual with personal responsibilities. With every successive experience, the idea of his "self" becomes more clearly delineated, and he begins to interpret everything in the light of the effect it has on himself. Thus, the idea of his "self" comes to occupy the forefront of his consciousness. All his experiences, the natural expansion of all his powers, all the natural processes he must undergo to become mature seem to act like a giant spotlight that focuses on his ego and, for the time being, lights up this concept out of due proportion to other concepts in his consciousness.

This self-consciousness is further emphasized by a heightened sensitiveness which comes to the whole physical and spiritual organism at this time, rendering the adolescent conscious of much of which adults in the same environment are entirely oblivious. Hence, the adolescent becomes extremely sensitive to what others think of him and to what others say or will say about him. He begins to weigh himself in what he thinks are the opinions of others. He tests himself critically for his strong and weak points. He begins to judge himself, even harshly, on matters which he suspects might not reflect his well-being in the eyes of those about him.

Thus, the unfolding of the "self" with the concomitant increased sensitiveness that comes to the adolescent at this time and an intensified consciousness of the presence of others, all go together to make for this abnormal fear of failure, this heightened self-respect, this dread of being thought stupid, clumsy, or incompetent which is so characteristic of the shy and bashful teen-age boy.

TABLE 20. Percentage of Adolescents on the Various High-School Levels to Whom Shyness Is a Cause of Serious Concern

Does being shy cause you serious concern?	*Freshmen*	*Sophomores*	*Juniors*	*Seniors*	*All classes*
Yes, frequently ...	11.4%	16.8%	19.0%	15.4%	15.7%
Occasionally	22.8	27.4	27.0	24.2	25.4
Rarely	64.6	54.0	52.6	58.4	57.4
No answer	1.2	1.8	1.4	2.0	1.5

Having briefly considered the principal underlying causes for shyness, we now turn to a consideration of the extent to which adolescents find this problem to be a cause of serious concern. Our findings on this point are set forth in Table 20.

From an analysis of this table we note that shyness seems to hit the boy hardest during his sophomore year in high school when he is around fifteen years old; for the largest jump in the number of those who find shyness a matter of serious concern takes place between the freshman and sophomore years when the percentage jumps 10 per cent.

Again we have a consistent though slight trend for boys to become more affected by a difficulty that interferes with their free and easy association with others as they become older, though this tendency seems to be checked somewhat when the boys reach their senior year, at which time the average boy is seventeen years old. We noted this same tendency in our findings on the extent to which boys said that they felt out of place because of awkwardness.

Taking all high-school boys together, we note that, on the average, four out of ten (41.1 per cent) find bashfulness a problem about which they are seriously concerned, at least occasionally. Of this number, slightly more than a third, or not quite one out of six (15.2 per cent) in the general high-school population say that this difficulty frequently causes them grave concern.

How Should Bashfulness Be Treated?

One reason why some adolescents are seriously bothered about their bashfulness is their strong desire for social activities. This desire is evident in the remark of the sophomore who states, "I would like very much to get into social activities but am very shy and do not know much about mixing, but this does not mean that I would not like to go out with girls." Another asks, "Why don't they teach us how to rid one's self of bashfulness? For instance, I am very bashful and not enjoying life as much as I could if I were not bashful. Several boys told me that I am fairly good looking but I have not enough nerve with the people I meet. I am sure I am not the only boy like this." Our findings vouch for the truth of his last remark.

If it is true, as some writers maintain,[18] that "adequate social relations is the most important single need of an individual in developing personality traits," then it would seem important that parents and teachers know how to deal wisely with adolescents afflicted with this problem so as to minimize, if possible, the repressive influence this difficulty has on personality development. Too many adults intensify and prolong the adolescent's bashfulness by making fun of it or by jokingly forcing the boy into situations where he must display his weakness and thus heighten his feeling of inadequacy in social situations. Such treatment may cause him to retreat completely from reality into a phantasy world of his own creation.

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[18] L. H. Meek, "The Immediate Social Relations of Students in Junior and Senior High Schools," *Progressive Education*, 14 (1938), 610–616.

Schumacher offers some sound advice to those who would injudiciously encourage the shy, introverted lad to engage in activities that require extravert traits. He says:

> The shy, sensitive individual belongs to the introverted type. It is not wise to try to force such a person into a situation calling for extravert characteristics. It is a fallacy to believe that the introvert, who may have turned to books as a compensatory measure, should be made to indulge in social activities and group games and sports. Rather what he needs is understanding of his nature and not efforts that will drive him further from objective relations as a mode of orientation.[19]

Where adults go contrary to this advice, the shy adolescent is liable to drift into a gloomy background. If he is not entirely crushed out of the running by what his peers call a "hardening process," his highly emotional experiences, resulting from forced attempts at overcoming shyness, may build up within him, though perhaps unconsciously, what Duncan[20] calls a "secret control" which renders subsequent attempts at adjustment in social situations more and more difficult until a sort of inferiority complex fastens upon him.

That this is the case with relatively few normal adolescents is fortunately indicated by the fact that less than a sixth of the subjects of our study stated that shyness frequently caused them serious concern. Nevertheless, the number is sufficiently large to warrant that not only parents but teachers as well should be watchful for adolescents with this problem. That teachers tend to ignore and underestimate the problem of the shy student is a matter of common knowledge since the wide publication of a thorough study of this point.[21] If teachers but manifested sympathy and understanding in handling the shy adolescent, they could do much toward opening the sluiceways of his locked-up personality and lead him out of the prison of his unsocial reactions into a broader and happier view of life.

Feelings of Inferiority and Mental Conflict

We now turn our attention to a consideration of the extent to which the adolescent, in comparing himself with his associates, judges himself to be inferior to, or as successful as, the average boy. To get this summary judgment from the adolescent, we asked him the question, *Do you feel that on the whole you are as successful as the average boy?* His response to this question should give us some insight into the extent to which he feels satisfied or dissatisfied with himself, and

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[19] Henry C. Schumacher, *The Adolescent,* 56.

[20] H. G. Duncan, "Secret Control" in *Readings in Educational Sociology,* edited by E. George Payne (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1932), 101–109.

[21] E. K. Wickman, *Children's Behavior and Teachers' Attitudes* (New York: The Commonwealth Fund Division of Publications, 1928), *passim.* Also, D. B. Ellis and L. W. Miller, "The Relationship of Teachers' Attitudes to Children's Problem Behavior," *Journal of Educational Psychology,* 37 (1936), 501–510.

at the same time an indication of the extent to which he feels that the adjustments he is making to the many situations in his life as a whole are satisfactory or dissatisfactory. In other words, the boy who answers "No" to this question gives some evidence of the presence of inferiority feelings in his life.

As was happily evident in the response to several summary questions previously referred to, the large majority of the adolescents in our high schools, when they consider their life as a whole, feel that they are fairly well adjusted. This heartening trend continues in the responses received to our present question; more than eight out of ten (82.8 per cent) said that they felt on the whole that they were as successful as the average boy. Of the remaining number, 12.5 per cent were definite about their negative reply, while 5.5 per cent were doubtful about their being as successful as the average, leaving .2 per cent who failed to reply.

In comparing our findings with the results obtained from a study[22] of the replies of high-school girls to a similar question, we note that boys tend to experience inferiority feelings less frequently than girls; 82.8 per cent of the boys as compared with 66.3 per cent of the girls feel as successful as others in their group.

To see to what extent the feeling of not being as successful as the average is a source of serious mental conflict for the adolescent, we followed the above question immediately with, *If not, does this cause you serious mental struggle?* One might expect mental conflict to follow naturally upon the adolescent's realization that he is less successful than his associates; but this is not the case, for nearly one third of those who were not sure that they were as successful as the average say that this does not cause them serious mental struggle. But two out of three of those who do not feel as successful as the average do experience mental conflict because of this feeling.

Don't Know How to Solve Mental Conflict

Of those who experience mental conflict because of their feeling less successful than others (about one tenth of the general high-school population), more than two thirds (67.8 per cent) say that they do not know how to overcome their mental struggles. Only one fourth (25.1 per cent) state that they know how to solve their conflict, and a few (7 per cent) are doubtful about it.

In studying the prevalence of this problem of feeling inferior, on the different levels in the high school we note no difference whatsoever. The number who have this problem on each level does not vary by more than four individuals either way. But this should be expected if our findings are valid, for Dimock also found that the feeling of

[22] Sister Mildred Knoebber, *The Self-Revelation of the Adolescent Girl*, 127.

being inferior or different "neither diminishes nor increases from the years twelve to sixteen."[23]

Summarizing the incidence of this problem of mental conflict resulting from an inferiority feeling, one out of eight are definitely convinced that they are less successful than the average boy. This feeling causes a serious mental conflict in two out of every three boys so concerned. And of those with a conflict — less than one out of ten among normal high-school boys — more than two thirds say that they do not know how to solve their difficulty. Thus, on an average, one out of every sixteen boys in high school, because of a feeling of being inferior, is faced with mental struggles which he does not know how to overcome. This means that the teacher meets on an average two such individuals with unsolved inferiority conflicts in every high-school class he faces.

While we agree with Sherman that "every sort of conflict may be useful if it is not too intense" and that "conflicts of inferiority sometimes save a person from failure because they spur him on to greater effort,"[24] we nevertheless feel that the mental struggles here spoken of are serious enough to prompt a sympathetic and helpful attitude on the part of the teacher.

The student who experiences serious mental struggles because he feels less successful than the average boy needs the help of a competent guide. If he is not helped, his state of conflict may have a debilitative effect upon him. He may lose his interest in things and is likely to become discouraged. Whether he manifests desirable or undesirable conduct depends on how he manages his conflicts. If he is discontented, grouchy, sarcastic, cynical, or even psychoneurotic, he is so because he has failed to solve his conflicts properly.[25]

Cause of Conflicts

Conflicts are likely to develop if the adolescent's adjustments to life are inadequate. And his adjustments tend to be regarded as inadequate in proportion to the degree to which he fails to make the actualities of his life approach his ideals and aspirations. The greater the gap between his actual situation and his ideal, the greater will be his feeling of inadequacy,[26] and the more likely will he be to feel less successful than others in his environment. A number of factors may cause him to feel less successful or inferior. There is first of all his own physical status, i.e., his height, weight, and strength, which Dimock found to be definitely associated with the sense of personal

[23] H. S. Dimock, *Rediscovering the Adolescent*, 65.

[24] Mandel Sherman, *Mental Hygiene and Education*, 150.

[25] Thomas Verner Moore, O.S.B., *Dynamic Psychology* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1926), 181.

[26] E. F. Heidbreder, "Self Ratings and Preferences," *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 25 (1930), 62–74.

adequacy.[27] Boys below the average physically reveal a reverberating effect on their personality as indicated by a greater feeling of difference. Second, the boy may cherish an exaggerated conception of his own abilities due to too easy success at an earlier age, and therefore performance now at his actual level of ability gives him the idea that he is not successful. Third, unfavorable comparison with others in the family circle may develop in him the idea that he is somewhat inferior.[28] Fourth, lack of social traits or limitation of social opportunities may cause him to regard himself overcritically. Fifth, lack of intellectual ability may prove to be the principal cause of his feeling inferior, particularly if emphasized by unsympathetic teachers who fail to take into account the fact of individual differences.[29]

Lack of ability or technique in any field, for that matter, may be the cause of inferiority feelings on the part of the adolescent.

The important matter here is that the adolescent be given the right attitude toward his capacities. He must be led to acknowledge frankly the fact that there are some things he cannot do, some objectives he cannot achieve. At the same time, the wise guide will bolster up his sense of worth by pointing out to him the things he can do and the objectives that do lie within his reach. With this understanding the adolescent will not be long in realizing that the shortest road to happiness and contentment lies in the way of working out a harmonious solution to his problems by revamping his life plan in accordance with his abilities.

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[27] H. S. Dimock, *op. cit.*, 66. See also, P. M. Symonds, "Life Problems and Interests of Adolescents," *The School Review,* 44 (1936), 506–518.

[28] Mary B. Sayles, *The Problem Child in School* (New York: The Commonwealth Fund Division of Publications, 1929), 68.

[29] U. H. Fleege, S.M., "On Inculcating a Failure Habit of Mind," *The Catholic Educational Review,* 35 (1937), 357–359.

Chapter 12

THE BOY-GIRL RELATIONSHIP AND ALLIED PROBLEMS

Our next topic for consideration centers in the problems issuing from that phase of the boy's social life which brings him into more or less close association with girls. Those problems in the boy-girl relationship, however, which touch more specifically on moral issues, such as those growing out of the petting and necking question, will be left for our chapter on difficulties regarding the virtue of purity.

The Problem of Proving Attractive to the Other Sex

One of the first manifestations of the adolescent era is a sudden and intense interest in matters of dress and personal appearance. With the boy, the transition is rather abrupt. The average boy up to thirteen or fourteen years old is little concerned about clothes and displays a positive aversion to soap and water. But now there awakens a passionate desire to look good in the eyes of others — a desire that may be frankly displayed or carefully suppressed, according to individual peculiarities or the force of circumstances. But displayed or suppressed, the problem of being attractive to the other fellow's sister is nevertheless present. All know the signs of the adolescent's budding efforts in this direction. In the beginning, of course, his approach is indirect. He makes use of opportunities to show off, engages in stunts, and performs various feats, all designed to impress and prove attractive to the fairer sex.[1] "The other sex, which hardly existed before, now turns on its subtle magnetism and establishes a new polarity,"[2] though the boy himself is slow to admit this in public. An illustration of the young adolescent's unwillingness to own up to his budding interest in girls is the following comment which a sophomore adds at the end of his paper in which his answers to various questions give every evidence of his being thrillingly anxious about his new feelings toward girls. He adds: "But don't get puzzled over any of my answers about girl friends. Because I don't like girls nor do I go out with any. One got a case on me for two months but I gave her a flat letter. I haven't heard from her since, and I don't guess she'll answer. But I'm glad. Girls don't appeal to me."

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[1] G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence,* II, 104.
[2] *Ibid.,* I, 318.

The desire to be attractive to the opposite sex will not be acknowledged publicly by most boys until some years later, after they have openly sought the company of girls. At first their eyes feast on the object of their affection "furtively and from afar." Should a girl come into their presence during this period, they become ill at ease and quite confused. Then gradually they seek contacts that must appear to be purely accidental. Finally, they whip up enough courage to ask for their first "date." This last step is a major advance in their socialization, for from now on they no longer consider themselves as boys but as young men.

The average adolescent desires to be attractive to the opposite sex. However, many boys feel that they are not. Our findings indicate that three out of every ten boys (30.7 per cent) feel they are attractive to girls, thus giving evidence of freedom from difficulties in this field. More than four out of ten (42.9 per cent), however, feel just the opposite. They have the problem of the adolescent who asks, "If you feel that girls don't like you, how can you make them like you?" There immediately arises the problem of adjustment to the idea of not being attractive or of seeking a means of becoming attractive. The thwarting of the desire to make a favorable impression on a girl friend may have rather serious repercussions on the adolescent's personality. Some may develop introvert tendencies while others may try to make themselves attractive by outlandish conduct. Because the desire for social relations with the opposite sex becomes stronger as the boy grows older, this problem of feeling unattractive to girls is likewise liable to become more annoying as he approaches his middle and upper teens, although we note a definite tendency for fewer and fewer boys to mention this difficulty as they proceed upward through the high school. This would indicate that as some boys get older, their wider opportunities for social relations eliminate the problem of their feeling unattractive to girls.

Besides those who are definite about their feeling attractive or unattractive to the fairer sex, we find that one out of every four (25.4 per cent) does not know whether he is attractive or not. While this doubtful state may prove a problem to some adolescents so concerned, it is probably only a matter of minor annoyance to the majority of them.

Frequency With Which High-School Boys Associate With Girls

Our next question, *Do you go out with girls?* was put to the adolescent not so much as a problem indicator but as a means of obtaining information for a further study of some of his problems. Whether girls help or hinder him spiritually might be related to the frequency with which he associates with them.

The responses to this question indicate that almost one out of

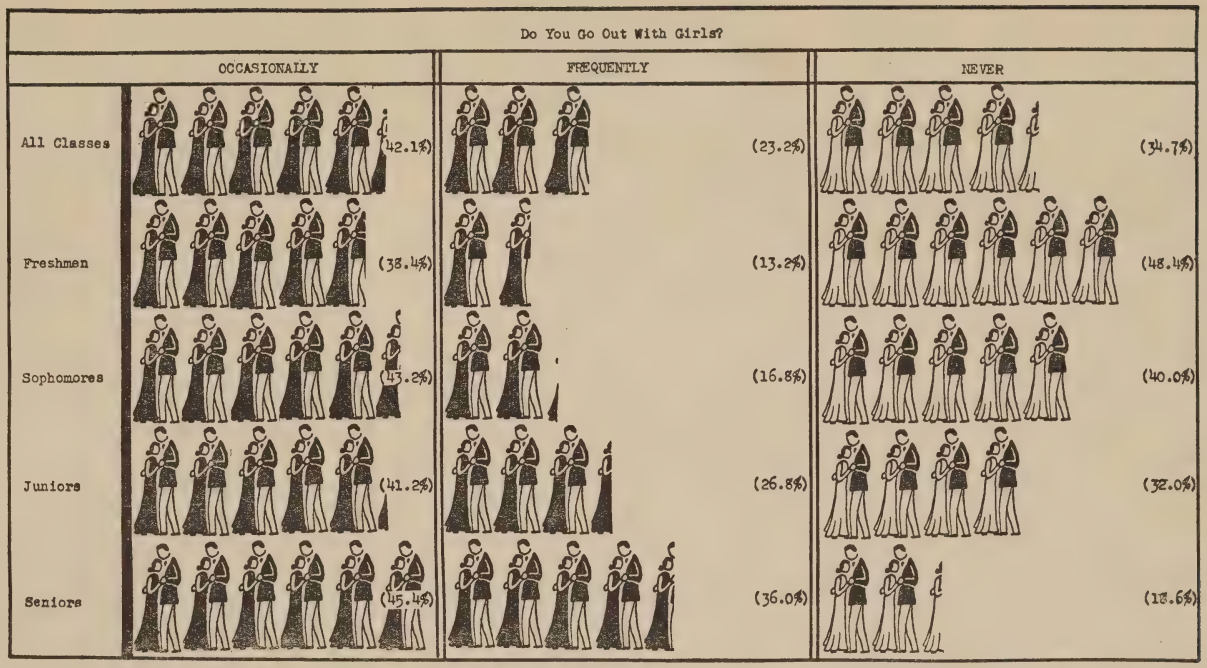

Figure 21. Frequency with which boys on the various high-school levels go out with girls. Each symbol represents 8 per cent of the adolescents in each respective group.

every four (23.3 per cent) goes out with girls frequently, four out of ten (42.1 per cent) go out with them occasionally, while more than one third (34.2 per cent) say they never go out with girls. As usual, a few failed to reply. As would be expected, there is a decided and consistent trend for more and more boys, as they become older, to go out with girls. (See Fig. 21.)

The proportion of boys who say they never go out with girls decreases from one out of two among freshmen to less than one out of five among seniors.

The trend evident in this illustration is a good indication of the development of heterosexual interests in the adolescent. Parents who try to suppress the boy's desire for social activities by enforcing a rigid stay-at-home discipline fail to recognize this natural development in their son.

Love Problems in the Boy-Girl Relationship

The above question on the frequency with which the boy associates with girls prompted such a flood of comments that there can be no doubt that many of the adolescent's problems center around the question of keeping company with girl friends.

For some the difficulty arises from a difference of viewpoints between parents and son. One senior who earlier in his paper complained of parental discipline puts his difficulty mildly when he says, "Most fathers and mothers and even relatives think that a sixteen-year-old boy should not even have a conversation with a girl." Another senior adds, "I don't know what to say when my mother says I shouldn't go out with girls when I want to."

Characteristic adolescent reactions to parental objections are evident in the following sampling of comments.

> I think that parents' ideas of not having dates at the age of seventeen is ridiculous. They think I am too young. I'm a sophomore and have attended all the social events of my school for the past two years and I seem to think if I had dates occasionally it would help to gain responsibility. I do not have trouble with impurities when I am around girls so I think I could handle myself very satisfactorily with my girl. She attends a well-known Catholic girls' academy in this city and is in the same class as I am, so I don't seem to think I could go wrong going out with her and other girls, do you? Probably at seventeen my mother and father were playing like little children of grammar school grades.
>
> Tell our parents to treat us the way we ought to be treated. Let a fellow go out once in a while with a girl. They think a fellow should wait until he is about eighteen years old first.
>
> I wish my parents would let me have a girl.
>
> I think there should be more chances to go out with girls. When my parents were young they went out and I can't see why they won't let me go out. All I wish is that my father and mother wouldn't object to the girl I go out with. She is nice and joyful and participates in sports and is neatly dressed, but my father says she is not the right one. I object and some-

times I have a fight with my father about this. Yet, I manage to see her secretly every night. I love her and she loves me and we have kissed each other many times. And I don't think this is merely a "school love" or something like that, do you?

I think it's about time older people realize that the younger generation is not so bad as they would make us out. My friends are all Catholic boys from well-to-do families (I was well to do at one time but am now in moderate circumstances) and the girls we go with are all from moderate-type families. And I can say, yes, we all neck, as you call it, on occasions, but I know very few of us have ever taken liberties. We all drink but very seldom and then moderately, and we look down on all people who live different from these rules. Yet our families think we are doing bad things if we are a little late in getting in, etc. Another thing, I am going with a Catholic girl at the present and have been for seven months. Recently her father told her unless other boys would date her more and I would date her less I would have to stop seeing her because he thought we might go too far after being together so much. Yes, we have kissed and also talked over about other matters, but both of us respect one another too much to do anything wrong. I think parents should know that their children have their own code and live up to it very strictly.

A junior, whose chief difficulty in this field is with his girl friend's mother, threatens, "If my girl's mother don't mind her own business there's going to be trouble!"

Flustered by First Love

Other comments on the subject of boy-girl relations center about the puzzling feelings of first love, as, for example, the sophomore who says, "I am puzzled over the feelings that I now experience toward girls." Or the junior who adds, "This may be a little odd but few people ever consider a boy falling in love with a girl. They say it is absurd, only a crush. The boy may fall in love with a girl and the girl falls for him seriously. There is no one to help him. I know. An explanation of what a boy should do in this case, I think, would be very helpful."

There is no doubt that adolescents do find difficult problems in their relations with girl friends and that they would welcome sincerely sympathetic advice from older people who understand their difficulties. Perhaps a bit of sound advice would be helpful to the type of adolescent represented by the senior who says, "I'm praying to go to Hollywood and to Sonja Henie. I do hope I'll make it." Such advice would save him a bit of disillusionment. All through his paper he has Sonja Henie on the brain. And there are others like him — those in the grip of their first love. Those not flustered by Sonja Henie are all aflutter over Deanna Durbin or some belle from the local high school. Sympathetic understanding and not ridicule or suppression is the way to the heart of the adolescent passing through this stage of his development.

Among the younger boys we find some who are puzzled over whether it is all right to go out with girls. A number of freshmen ask: "Is it

wrong for boys to go out with girls?" "Do you think it is all right for a fourteen-year-old boy to be seen with a girl?" "If you like a girl very much and she likes you, should you continue or not to go with her at such an early age (fourteen)?" "Is it right for a boy to think he loves a girl at my age, fourteen?" Still others are doubtful about how old a boy should be before he starts going out with girls or how late he ought to be allowed to stay out. Some ask: "When should a boy start going around with girls?" "How old should a boy be before he is allowed to go out with girls?" Others inquire: "How late should a boy sixteen be able to stay out nights?" A sophomore challenges the reader: "If you were fifteen years old, wouldn't you think you were big enough to go out till 10:30 or 11:00 o'clock?" Still other comments touched on other problems in the boy-girl relationship. A senior wants to know: "Is it sinful to go steady with a non-Catholic girl and have intentions of marrying her some day?" Another asks about the problem of going steady while still in high school: "Is it wrong for a boy of eighteen to go steady with a girl of seventeen?" Another: "How do you know when you are honestly in love?" "How to keep a girl and hold her admiration," problems of etiquette when on a date, and fights over the use of the family car on date night are other problems that take their rise from the girl-friend question.

Influence of Girls on Boys

In any discussion of a boy's relations with girls there always arises the question of the influence girls have on the boy's life, and more particularly their influence on his spiritual life. Some who object to a boy's associating with girls seem to assume that such adolescent company keeping is inevitably harmful to the boy. To sound out the boy's reaction to the moral influence of girls upon his life we asked him, *Do girls help or hinder you in your spiritual life?*

Our findings on this point are quite interesting. Almost twice as many boys claim that girls have a beneficial effect on their spiritual life as those who say the opposite. Three out of every ten boys (30.3 per cent) say that girls help them spiritually while one out of every six (16.9 per cent) says that they hinder him. An additional 2.1 per cent qualify their answer by writing "help me sometimes," and an additional 2.6 per cent say, "girls hinder me sometimes."

Somewhat more than one third of the boys (35.4 per cent), however, say that girls do not have any effect on them either way; they neither help them spiritually nor hinder them. The majority who make this reply come from the lower classes in the high school where very many say that they seldom if ever associate with girls.

Outside of the 2.7 per cent of the boys who fail to answer and the 4.2 per cent who are doubtful as to whether girls help or hinder them spiritually, 5.8 per cent say that girls both help them and hinder

them. Many of these explain: "It depends on the girl, some help, some hinder." Others add: "Certain ones hinder me"; "Depends on the morality of the girl"; "They hinder me as much as help me"; "Catholic girls help me, others do not"; "In general help, but one girl hinders me"; "Most help, especially my steady"; "The decent ones help me."

Nearly one out of every four who answered this question added a reason for his answer or a word of explanation. From this spontaneously volunteered information we get an insight into how girls help or hinder the boy in his spiritual life.

How Girls Hinder or Help

The principal reason offered by those who say that girls hinder them is, "They give me bad thoughts," though quite a few explain, "They are a source of temptation to me." Other reasons volunteered are: "Hinder me because I've always got them on my mind"; "Hinder — cause impure thoughts"; "Hinder me a lot, cause me to sin"; "Cause temptations at times but sin very rarely"; "Hinder me by giving me wrong ideas."

Those who say that girls help them spiritually offer the following reasons for concluding thus:

Their holiness is an inspiration to me.
Help me very much because I'm better when they are around.
Help, for they make me want to respect them rather than lower myself in their presence.
Help me. My girl friend is a great inspiration to me.
Help and encourage me — I don't think of sex with girls around.
They urge me on to good.
Somehow my girl friend makes me feel I should be the equal of her mentally and spiritually.
Help, for the girls I know are pure.
Help me — I feel like being good when with them.
Make me want to make something of myself.
Help, because you cannot find anything better than a nice girl.
Help, because when I'm with them my mind is off impure things.
They help. A girl is a fine noble creature.

The principal manner in which boys feel that girls help them spiritually is by way of inspiration. They would agree that there is something about a pure girl that prompts a sort of reverence and deep respect, something that puts to silence the coarser and more licentious promptings of the boy's nature. Many of them seem to have experienced what Tennyson had in mind when he wrote in his *Idylls of the King:*

> For indeed I knew
> Of no more subtle master under heaven
> Than is the maiden passion for a maid,
> Not only to keep down the base in man,
> But teach high thought, and amiable words
> And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
> And love of truth, and all that makes a man.

Few will deny the charm of youthful love. Few will deny its purity of motive, its idealization, or its influence in heightening self-respect, strengthening character, and stimulating worthy ambition. Boys who say they are influenced toward good by their associations with girls give proof of this fact. Yet the garden which will produce the finest flowers will likewise grow the rankest weeds; for "those very capacities and powers through which man approximates most closely to the divine, when perverted, bring him nearest to the threshold of hell."[3]

Whether a boy's associations with girls will influence him to produce flowers of virtue or weeds of vice seems to depend not only on the girl — though it is largely true that our boys are what our girls make them — but on the boy as well, and particularly on the attitude he usually takes toward sex. This attitude in turn depends chiefly on the manner in which he was introduced to the subject of sex. Our findings support Father Lord's view that if the right attitude toward sex were ingrained in children from infancy, there would be no boy-girl problem in the sense that association with girls is likely to prove detrimental to boys. Boys who have been given the correct attitude realize that they are carriers of life, potential fathers. The self-respect which this realization tends to foster awakens a similar respect in those of the opposite sex. They come to regard the body of a woman as "the chalice which God has shaped to hold the precious life of an unborn baby," and would never think of tearing asunder the veil with which Christian civilization has clothed her.[4]

Relation Between Frequency of Dates and Influence of Girls on Boys

For some who do not have this right attitude, association with self-respecting girls may foster it. Evidence for this statement appears in Figure 22, in which we compare the frequency with which boys associate with girls and the influence that boys say the girls exert upon them. Of course, this statement is made on the assumption that as many boys who have had an ideal introduction into the subject of sex go out with girls as those who have not been so fortunate.

According to this graph, the chances of a boy's being helped spiritually by girls are nearly three times as great for the boy who associates with them frequently as for the boy who never associates with them except in his imagination. Furthermore, the chances of being hindered by girls appear to be nearly twice as great for the boy who never goes out with girls (but who has them in his mind nevertheless) as for the boy who goes out with them frequently. And the chances of girls having an indifferent effect upon a boy are smallest, as would

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[3] Frederick Tracy, *The Psychology of Adolescence* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1921), 147.

[4] Daniel A. Lord, S.J., *Some Notes on the Guidance of Youth*, 103.

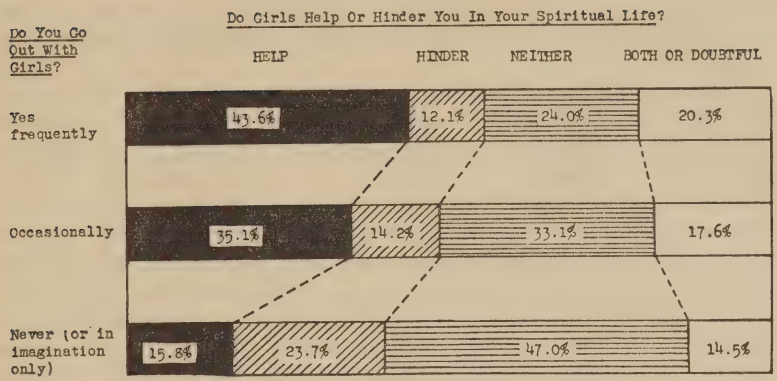

Figure 22. Comparison of the frequency with which boys go out with girls and the influence which boys feel girls have on them spiritually.

be expected, for the boy who is in their presence frequently and greatest for the boy who is never or only seldom in contact with them.

Throughout the entire graph we note a definite and consistent trend for boys who are frequently brought into more or less close association with girls to complain less of girls having a harmful effect on their spiritual life than boys who associate with girls less often. Thus, 43.6 per cent of the boys who frequently go out with girls say that girls help them while only 35.1 per cent who go out with them only occasionally say the same. Of those who never associate with girls, 15.8 per cent claim that girls help them spiritually.

Among the boys who frequently go out with girls, the chances of girls helping the boy in his spiritual life over the chances of hindering him are nearly four to one. In other words, for the boy who frequently associates with girls, the effect that they will have on him spiritually will probably be helpful in almost one out of two cases, indifferent in one out of four, varied in one out of five, and harmful in one out of eight. For the boy who never goes out with girls, the effect which girls (i.e., the thought of girls) will have on his spiritual life will probably be indifferent in almost one out of two cases, harmful in nearly one out of four, helpful in almost one out of six, and varied in about the same ratio, one out of six. Furthermore, the effect of girls on the boy who goes out with them occasionally will probably be helpful in more than one out of three cases, indifferent in slightly less than one out of three, varied in more than one out of six, and harmful in one out of seven cases.

Girls may have significant effects both on boys who associate with them and on boys who do not. The reader will note that our findings indicate the following: (1) The chances are the least that girls will have a harmful effect on the spiritual life of boys who frequently and

occasionally associate with them. (2) The chances are the greatest that thoughts about girls will be harmful to boys who never go out with them.

Thus, our findings seem to support the idea that a moderate association between the sexes during the adolescent period is beneficial to the boy's spiritual life and that a lack of this association tends to emphasize or increase the difficulties that girls may cause the boy along moral lines. Does this mean that in the absence of the refining and ennobling influence which a self-respecting girl naturally has upon a boy, the boy's imagination is less likely to be checked and therefore more likely to run riot in the realms of mental depravity, thus hindering him spiritually? Does it mean that the coarser desires of a boy's nature are liable to prompt him habitually to regard girls in the wrong sense until his actual association with decent girls acquaints him with the uplifting ideal of girlhood that most of our Catholic girls represent? Our findings seem to point to a positive answer to both these questions.

Perhaps the trend in our data indicated above can be partially explained by the fact that boys who associate with girls satisfy, by this very association, an awakening desire of their adolescent nature to be and to scintillate in the presence of the opposite sex. But when this urge is left unsatisfied because of a lack of association with girls, the boy is likely to seek his satisfaction in an imaginative garden of girls where his lower nature is only too ready to assert itself. Hence, the boy who does not go out with girls is likely to feel that girls have a harmful effect on him spiritually, whereas, had he ever actually associated with decent girls, he would not find them so suggestive of wrong thoughts.

In other words, many a boy, because of a wrong attitude toward the whole question of sex which was fostered by the tainted source of his misinformation on this subject, finds the presence or even the very thought of girls a reminder of his degraded views. To him, girls have only one purpose, supply only one topic of conversation, suggest only one thought. It is only after he has enjoyed the wholesome, carefree comradeship of respectable girls that he becomes acquainted with the sweet nobility of girlhood and realizes for the first time how false his customary views on girls have been.

Of course, the nature of a girl's influence on a boy depends on the kind of a girl with whom he associates. But from our findings, it would seem that the majority of the boys in this study who frequently associate with girls associate with the respectable type; for we noted that there was a definite relation between the frequency with which boys associated with girls and the latter's influence on the boy's spiritual life. This statement is in a way substantiated by the replies to the question, *Are your best girl friends Catholic?* In answer to this question, 74.9 per cent of the boys stated that their best girl friends

are Catholic. An additional 15 per cent qualify their positive response by the word *some,* leaving only one in ten who says his best girl friends are not Catholic. While we are aware that "Catholic" and "respectable" are not used synonymously in describing girl friends, nevertheless, there is, in all probability, a favorable correlation between these two descriptives in the actual moral status of the girl.

Home Not Open to Adolescent Friendships

Another factor affecting a girl's influence on a boy is the atmosphere in which their meetings or associations take place. The general surroundings may foster the taking of liberties or may be conducive to the maintaining of a proper respect for each other. How frequently do their meetings take place in the wholesome atmosphere of the home where proper chaperonage is probable? We have an indirect answer to this query in the response received to a question treated in an earlier chapter[5] when we found that only 41 per cent of the girl's parents encourage the boy to visit the girl in the home. Thirty-four per cent of the boys claim their parents never encourage them to do so, while an additional 21 per cent[6] were unable to give a definite "Yes" or "No" answer; most of these had not gone out with girls frequently enough to know and hence said that they were doubtful. At least up to this time the invitation to visit the girl in the home had not been extended to them.

In so far as our subjects are representative of the average adolescents in high school, we may conclude that a large percentage of parents do not encourage the boy to visit the girl in the home. This is indeed unfortunate, for the home provides the best protection against the serious consequences that might result from clandestine love-making. At the same time it teaches both the boy and the girl very important lessons in social living.

Advantages of "Open House"

With the home as a meeting place, that peculiar and inevitable characteristic known as "puppy love" has its best opportunity to work itself out to the satisfaction of everyone concerned. In the genial atmosphere of the home this attack of first love achieves a positive value aside from its contribution to the socialization process; it teaches the adolescent not to treat too seriously the flush of mere excitement. Most of us are familiar with the sad story of the oversheltered young man or woman who is suddenly caught up and swept away by an ill-advised and sometimes morally disastrous love affair. Such cases might be avoided if normal adjustments were permitted to take place

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[5] Cf. *supra,* 70–71.

[6] These percentages are figured on the basis of only the two thirds of the subjects of this study who stated earlier that they go out with girls.

within the home under the tempering smile of understanding parents. In the establishing of these social relationships, as in so many other phases of the adolescent's life, what the boy desires most is cooperation and not opposition.

In a previous chapter[7] we noted that, on an average, the parents of eight out of every ten boys (79.1 per cent) encourage their sons to bring their friends to their home at least on occasion. Only one half of the parents, however, make this a frequent practice, while one out of every five never encourage this policy at all, thereby leaving much to be desired in the matter of parental cooperation.

Those parents act wisely who throw open their home as a meeting place for adolescents. By so doing they automatically control their son's choice of companions and thus save themselves much grief. Parents who protest against the boy's choice of a friend only render the objectionable friend more desirable in the boy's eyes; by encouraging the boy to bring his friends into the house they would give him an opportunity to see the inadequacies of his friend by way of contrast in the family setting and thus automatically lead the boy to see the inadvisability of his choice.

In comparing the percentage of parents who encourage the boy to visit his girl friend in the home (41.1 per cent) and the percentage who throw open their home to their son's boy friends (79.1 per cent), we note a considerable difference. Thus, it would seem that parents provide the least safeguards for those associations of the boy where possible moral danger is the greatest. Father Lord believes that to teach parents how to make the home over which they rule a perfect center of social life for their children would be a great step forward in the solution of all youth's problems.[8]

Insufficient Catholic Social Activities

Inadequate Provisions by the Parish

If the majority of boys are not encouraged to court their girl friends under the protective eye of parents, to what extent is this protection offered by social activities sponsored and supervised by the parish? To what extent are adolescents satisfied with their opportunities for such activities as currently provided by the parish? Because some dioceses forbid the sponsoring of dances and similar social activities under Catholic auspices, we thought it important to test the adolescent's reaction on this point; hence we asked him, *Do you think your parish provides sufficient social "get-togethers" for boys and girls?* We evidently touched a sore spot in asking this question, for it brought forth a vociferous response, with many adding comments and quite

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[7] Cf. *supra*, 70.

[8] Daniel A. Lord, *Some Notes on the Guidance of Youth*, 89.

a few heavily underlining their negative reply. Over half of the boys (56.1 per cent) are definitely dissatisfied with the opportunities for social activities which the parish provides. Somewhat more than a third (36.3 per cent), however, are satisfied. The rest of the boys could not come to a definite decision as to whether the parish provides sufficient social activities or not.

In studying the variation in responses on the different levels within the high school, we find a decided tendency for the older boys to complain of the inadequate social activities in the parish much more frequently than the younger boys. But this is only what might be expected.

To acquaint the reader better with the adolescent's mind on this vital problem of inadequate opportunities for Catholic social activities, we present a random sampling of comments on this point.

> There is a laxity on the part of most older people in our parishes; they do not cooperate with us young people. Don't they know that an occasional dance is part of our life? One reason I believe for mixed marriages is the lack of social activities in the Catholic Church. . . . Young people will not sacrifice a night to come down to the parish hall just to discuss religion. There must be some other social activity to hold them.
>
> I wish the Archbishop would lift the ban on Catholic dances, because the boys and girls are going to dance somewhere anyhow.
>
> Our Bishop wants Catholic boys and girls to get together, but how can we if we do not have some way to meet? He won't allow Catholic dances or nothing in our diocese.
>
> There is not enough social life available. If there were more social activities it would keep the fellows from hanging around street corners and becoming indecent and immoral. Not only should there be Catholic dances but likewise some things that appeal to us boys such as clubs, hobbies, and Catholic institutions like the YMCA. The trouble with many of the boys of today is that they hang around with gangs and get the facts of life the wrong way. They hear a lot of stories of what the other boys do and then see if they can't do it too. I think the Church could help us out a lot by giving us a place to go.
>
> I think the Catholic Church and school in every parish should try to bring Catholic boys and girls together by dances and socials, clubs, and athletics. And then give us opportunities to be on the "inside" in the Church's activities.
>
> I think the Church ought to allow Catholic organizations to have dances so that Catholic young men and women can get acquainted.
>
> I would certainly like *more* Catholic social affairs for Catholic boys and girls so we could meet Catholic girls.
>
> Because of peculiar and old-fashioned views in our parish, Catholic boys and girls have very little chance of mingling. Yet they keep on harping on mixed marriages!

Wholesome Social Life a Natural Right

If the parish does not provide sufficient opportunities for our Catholic adolescents to carry on their social activities and the home fails to prove a welcome meeting place for them, where will they go? Young

people quite naturally and rightfully want to associate with other young people, and, above all, they feel they have a right to this social life. Those who would try to combat it forget that this desire for companionship with the opposite sex is a normal urge — they would do much better to direct it, for too rigorous efforts to repress this impulse or to block it completely may result only in making it more explosive and difficult to control when occasions for following it do present themselves.[9] We need only to recall the hectic reactions that take place when boys and girls from boarding schools meet. Their conduct is much more unrestrained than it would be if mixed relations were more usual with them. While it is true that familiarity breeds contempt, a well-regulated familiarity between the sexes results in their taking each other for granted and thereby lessens the possibility of many a moral difficulty. As Father Lord reminds us, celibates must not forget this important syllogism:

> God intended boys and girls to be attracted to one another. . . . If this were not true, the Great Sacrament would have no place in the scheme of the world. . . .
>
> Hence . . . well-ordered and wholesome social life for youth is natural and right.[10]

Unless the parish or Catholic organizations within the parish provide opportunities for social activities in a healthy atmosphere, our young people will seek their social life in surroundings that are none too wholesome. "We counselors and guides have a clear alternative: Shall we help young people to live their lives correctly? Or shall we leave that work to the enemies of God and of morality? This decision rests with us."[11]

Battle on the Morality Front

As everyone knows, the battle for the possession of youth today is being fought on the morality front, and more directly along the lines of social life activities. It is indeed difficult for the adolescent to continue to believe that the Church is up to date and vitally interested in his welfare when her ministers in certain quarters fail to provide opportunities for social activities where he can give expression to the social needs of his nature in a healthy atmosphere.

In this fight for the allegiance of youth, Catholic leaders are contending with the shrewdest entertainment forces in the world; sin is gilded as licet pleasure; social recreation is shot through with a thousand temptations and incitements to sin. Modern commercialism, with a keen insight into the psychology of youth, throws out a world of snares teeming with sex suggestions, laden with appeals to love

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[9] Raphael McCarthy, S.J., *Training the Adolescent,* 116.
[10] Daniel A. Lord, *op. cit.,* 85.
[11] *Ibid.,* 86.

of leisure and softness of life, ready to lure the adolescent hungry for social life into the dragnet of moral depravity.

If the Church is to maintain her hold on youth, she cannot afford to let her young people seek social recreation where they may; she must provide opportunities for them where they can get together for a pleasant time socially. As we noted above, over half of our young people of high-school age feel that at present this is not being done sufficiently. It is true that some parishes offer as an excuse their lack of suitable accommodations for holding such social activities. However, what will result if this situation is not remedied? We may continue to preach the Gospel on Sunday, but our young people will go out to a beer garden or night club on Monday, where the devil is right on hand to see to it that he gets the lion's share.[12] And sooner or later we shall find ourselves preaching the Gospel to just a few less on Sunday.

Some parishes offer the excuse that the parish may not sponsor social affairs because they turn out to be occasions of sin for the young people. In answer to this objection, we present the opinion of one who is not only acquainted with the mind of the Church in this matter, but who for years has lived as closely to youth as any pastor of souls, Father Lord. He says:

> It is my reasoned conviction, checked by the experience of a large number of priests and religious with whom I have talked, that among decent young people there is far less sin or occasion for sin than shocked rumor seems to indicate. . . .
>
> What I believe is this: When decent young people, with the normal safeguards thrown around them, dance together, or picnic together, or play games, or meet in one another's homes, or go out in foursomes or in larger groups, sin is by no means a common occurrence. Youth is fundamentally sound; the tendency to look on all of youth's social contacts as occasions of sin is simple nonsense. . . . There have been priests who have made ridiculous statements such as, "Young people cannot dance together without being in a proximate occasion of sin. . . ." In the boy-girl relationship among decent people there is, let me repeat, far less sin than the scandal shouters would have us believe exists.[13]

Early Friendship and Mixed Marriages

Another factor that we cannot well pass over in considering the problems of the adolescent which spring from a lack of Catholic social activities is the mixed-marriage problem. While this is strictly not the high-school boy's problem, though it does concern him ultimately, it takes its rise in the friendships that are formed during the teen years.

As we stressed above, as boys and girls grow older they want to be

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[12] The Regents' Inquiry reports that fully one fourth of the boys and one third of the girls dance in public dance halls, roadhouses, and night clubs whenever they do dance. Francis T. Spaulding, *High School and Life*, The Regents' Inquiry (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1938), 50.

[13] *Ibid.*, 86–87.

together, and they will get together regardless of the means that may be taken to keep them apart. At the same time, the Church is strongly opposed to mixed marriages. It seems only logical, then, that those in charge of youth have the duty of seeing to it that Catholic young men have a chance to meet Catholic young women. We take the liberty here to quote Father Lord's summary of this problem, for he writes pointedly on the question at issue:

> Unless the Catholic school fosters a wholesome social life . . .
> Unless the Catholic home opens its doors to the Catholic friends of its sons and daughters . . .
> Unless the Catholic parish becomes the center to which Catholic young people can turn in the confident hope that under safe and happy auspices churchmen will make it possible for them to meet the sort of people of whom the Church can officially approve . . .
> Unless these things come to pass, the problems of mixed marriages will continue.
> The mixed-marriage problem is one of simple arithmetic; we Catholics are outnumbered four to one. If we stay in that ratio, the chance that Catholics will marry those of their own faith is one in four. The ratio must be rebalanced by a social life in which Catholic young people meet other Catholic young people exclusively. Marriages come out of social life. We can completely destroy the four-to-one ratio by a social life that is entirely Catholic. All the sermons and headshakings and pastoral letters won't readjust the mathematics of four to one. A well organized social life does readjust it and always will.[14]

Dancing and the Catholic Adolescent

The Church and Dancing

Those who would argue that the sponsoring of dances is contrary to the spirit of the Church forget that the Church has ever been the patron of arts; that the Church looked askance at the Puritans who forbade even legitimate dancing; that it was the Church which originated and kept alive Maypole dancing in the villages when other men termed the practice "the work of the devil"; that it was the Church that made the numerous feast days in Catholic countries conspicuous by folk dancing. Those individuals need to be reminded that such has been the tradition of the Church which has mothered young men and women for centuries and knows eminently well what is proper for their eternal welfare. She has watched her children dance for 1900 years, never once condemning legitimate forms of dancing; nor has she ever prohibited the act of dancing because of abuses on the part of some individuals.[15]

But those opposed object that dancing today is too dangerous to the

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[14] *Ibid.*, 117–118.

[15] Fulgence Meyer, O.F.M., *On or Off With the Dance* (Cincinnati: St. Francis Book Shop, 1935), 7.

morals of the participants.[16] That this is true of certain modern dances which represent a debauched and demoralized form of the art is admitted, but why condemn all dancing on that score? Is the type of dancing in which clean-minded young people engage today necessarily objectionable morally? Many do not think so. A modern Catholic writer on this subject expresses his view thus: "Prudes are alarmed by dancing, which in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand is, among decent young people, quite free from even danger."[17] The editors of the *Journal of Religious Instruction* believe that "dancing and dances are normal recreations for youth" and further that "school dances are valuable character building agencies."[18]

The School and Social Activities

This brings up the question of the extent to which adolescents feel that the school is fulfilling its duty of cooperating with the home and the parish in providing opportunities for social activities. We asked the boys the question, *Do you think the school provides sufficient opportunities for boys and girls to get together socially?* One half of the boys (49.3 per cent) answered "No," and somewhat more than four out of ten (43.4 per cent) answered "Yes." No answer was given by .5 per cent of the boys, and 6.8 per cent replied, "I don't know." (See Fig. 23.)

In the responses to the present question and to the question on parish social activities, a similar trend will be noticed. There is a tendency for the number of boys who indicate dissatisfaction with the social opportunities provided to differ strikingly according to the school which they attend and the diocese in which they are located. The number complaining of inadequate social activities is exceptionally high in the schools of a couple of the more than a dozen dioceses in which this study was made, in which there is a ban on the sponsoring of dances under Catholic auspices.

We likewise note a striking difference between the number of underclassmen and the number of upperclassmen who are dissatisfied with the social activities provided by the school. Almost twice as many

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[16] M. W. Peck and F. L. Wells ["On the Psycho-Sexuality of College Graduate Men," *Mental Hygiene*, 7 (1923), 699] found that college graduate men, in mentioning the various means that have proved the best outlet for turning their thoughts away from sex, rate social activity third, in the order of effectiveness, muscular exercise first, and intellectual work second. These men were asked what effect mixing socially with the better class of girls at dances, parties, etc., had on them. The number of men who stated that such social activity decreased sexual cravings and the difficulty of controlling them was more than five times greater than the number of those who indicated the opposite.

[17] Daniel A. Lord, *op. cit.*, 109.

[18] "School Dances" (1939), 695–697.

seniors as freshmen complain of a lack of these social activities — 61 per cent as compared with 34 per cent.

According to Figure 23, 36.3 per cent of the boys are satisfied with the amount of social recreation provided by the parish and 43.4 per cent are satisfied with that provided by the school. It appears, there-

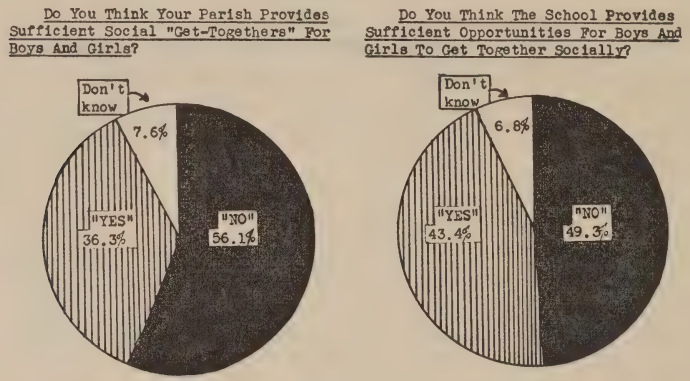

Figure 23. Extent to which parish and school fail to provide sufficient social opportunities.

fore, that the high school, in the boy's mind, is meeting the social needs of the adolescent more effectively than the parish. But the school is still far from utilizing social activities to the extent that it might in fostering the religious formation of youth.

A Laboratory for Applying Moral Principles

Most educators are aware that an enriched social experience is fully as valuable as any type of factual knowledge. However, few seem to realize that school dances and other school socials afford the student a good opportunity to apply the principles which he has learned in religion classes. Some go to the extreme of regarding school dances as definite moral dangers; others dismiss such functions as foreign to Catholic education. Those who argue thus forget that Catholic education includes specific preparation for normal social living. The editors of the *Journal of Religious Instruction* believe that "those interested in the religious development of youth cannot dismiss the matter of school dances as something foreign to the question." They believe that "departments of religion in particular have a responsibility to give boys and girls not only an understanding of what is right and wrong but an abundance of experience in applying knowledge." They further contend:

> Dancing and dances are normal recreations for youth. They are really fields for applying knowledge. We doubt the advisability of looking upon

a school dance as a time of great moral danger. If school dances are properly conducted and if the moral teaching and guidance in the school is as it should be, a school dance will not be a source of danger. We believe that school dances are valuable character building agencies; therefore, they are factors in the religious development of youth.[19]

Learning how to translate the principles taught in the religion class into proper conduct in social life is a genuine problem for adolescents and one that is solved satisfactorily only with the benefit of practice and guidance. The school that ignores this problem is certainly not acting wisely. If youth are to profit to the full from their Catholic education, the school must prepare them gradually and specifically for the moral problems they will meet. And since the major portion of their moral problems center about boy-girl relations, this preparation includes the fostering of school dances and other social activities.

If the school and the parish ignore sponsoring these activities, the adolescent is too likely to be introduced into social life in an atmosphere divorced from religion and gradually come to think of social activities as a phase of life divorced from religion. A senior points out the danger in this direction: "I think the school should have social activities and dances because if the school doesn't the boys go to beer gardens and become acquainted with bad habits and bad practices." Enough boys complain in their comments of having to go to "dimly lighted, cheap dance joints where a fellow could get by with anything" if they want to dance, to convince the writer that the majority are not satisfied with the social recreation offered in such a questionable environment. Furthermore, a number of the boys say that they would prefer "Catholic dances under the guidance of good older people where a high-school student would have the opportunity to meet girls of his own class and religion."

These young people are not at all averse to having religion dominate their social life. In fact, they expect it and welcome with hearty enthusiasm the least suggestion to weave religion into their social activities. But, when the very same teachers who tell them that religion is a twenty-four-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week affair, turn right around and look disapprovingly on their desires to engage in the innocent expression of their social nature, it all appears too incongruous and puzzling to understand. As a result, the students become just a bit more convinced that their teachers do not understand them.

Young people want to be together; they want to go together; they want to dance together. They will do all three, either in the wholesome atmosphere of social activities sponsored under Catholic auspices or in the suggestive environment of commercial centers operated by questionable management. There seems to be only one wise course for Catholic leaders of youth to follow if our Catholic young people are to be saved from moral shipwreck in their social life.

[19] *Ibid.*, 695–697.

When Parents Are Injudicious

Other difficulties in the adolescent's social life, but of far less moral significance, are those that grow out of an overstrict, latchkey discipline in the home. In a previous chapter[20] we saw how more than one out of every four adolescents (27.3 per cent) felt that he was not allowed as many social liberties as other boys of his age and that three out of every four of these (75.1 per cent) argue with their parents for more liberty. Furthermore, nearly one fourth of the boys (23.4 per cent) said that they were not allowed out at night as often as they think a boy of their age should be allowed out, indicating that what most of the boys who complain of insufficient social liberty have in mind is the lack of permission to go out at night and mix with the crowd.

Some make their complaint more definite by adding comments. From these it is evident that many a parent is too slow in realizing that their little boy who was in knee pants a year or two ago has suddenly become an adult. They fail to realize that his surging desires to go with the crowd, to have a girl, and to want to dance are merely the natural expression of the unfolding of the social side of his nature. Too many parents are unwittingly derelict because they try to curb this natural desire for new freedom by stricter discipline and, as a result, either interfere with the proper development of the social side of the boy's nature or cause him to deceive them and perhaps break with them entirely.[21]

Boys feel that their parents are the slowest to recognize the changes that are going on within them. This feeling is especially prevalent in those cases where parents are averse to granting this new independence which the adolescent craves. Some parents are hesitant about discarding preadolescent methods of control, for they fear it will mean a lessening of mutual love and respect between the boy and themselves. Mothers, in particular, make it difficult for the boy to untie himself from their apron strings because they do not like to relinquish the satisfaction that naturally issues from the feeling of having someone dependent upon them. Actually, if this new liberty is granted judiciously, there need be no lessening of mutual love; on the contrary, there can be a strengthening of it which results from the new respect which the parents' expression of understanding commands in the adolescent.

Those parents who clamp down with stricter discipline at this period of the adolescent's development when he cannot help feeling a desire for more liberty could scarcely follow a surer way of di-

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[20] Cf. *supra*, 72–73.

[21] Fowler D. Brooks, *The Psychology of Adolescence* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1929), 191.

vorcing their son's confidence and love from themselves. They forget that man's nature is like a stream; you cannot dam it up without providing an outlet somewhere. And this is particularly true during the floodtime of adolescence. The boy who has to put up with parental temper and pious advice, with no social encouragement or guidance from parents, will soon make up his mind to satisfy himself the way he wants. In such a frame of mind, he is liable not to be too careful either in the choice of his companions or in the choice of the environment in which he seeks an outlet for the social impulses bursting within him.

An eighteen-year-old senior comments: "My father and mother won't let me go out nights and don't want me to dance. I don't see what is wrong with dancing, for in my mind it is about the only way to meet a girl." The parents of this student certainly are not acting in a way that will lessen their son's social problems and command his respect in the future.

Money and the Girl

Another problem that affects the boy's social life is the limitation which a lack of spending money places on his social activities. Though this difficulty has no real serious implications, it nevertheless proves quite disconcerting to the boy where it does exist. To find out the incidence of this problem among our Catholic high-school students we asked them, *Do you find a lack of finances a serious difficulty in your social activities?* Their replies indicate that nearly two out of every three (63.7 per cent) find the shortage of spending money a serious difficulty in their social activities, at least occasionally. However, fewer than three out of ten (27.8 per cent) find this to be their difficulty frequently. The other 35.9 per cent experience this trouble only occasionally. This leaves more than a third of the boys (36.2 per cent) who say they are not bothered by a shortage of funds for social purposes.

Some of the boys who mention this problem add that they are not complaining, for they realize that their parents are not able to give them much spending money. Others regard their parents as old fashioned because of their attitude toward money. A senior says, "I have to work regularly, turn in every cent, and yet they will not give me an allowance. I can't get them to drop their old-fashioned ideas." Then there are some who feel themselves to be at a disadvantage because of their poverty, such as the boy who asks, "How can a poor fellow like myself with no money and no car have a chance with the girls against fellows who have cars and money?" Still others have the problem of the senior who adds, "I don't get enough spending money to travel with a 'high class' crowd and go to formal dances. Instead I have to go to tough dances with a low admission price of fifteen cents or a quarter. How can a fellow stay straight in such a

place where if you don't drink they think you are a sap?" No doubt the pressure of the group, even in such an atmosphere, exerts a powerful influence on a young man's conduct.

The Problem of Drink Among Catholic Adolescents

To what extent is the problem of drink present among our Catholic adolescents? We investigated this problem from several angles, inquiring into the number who indulge in any drink stronger than beer, their reason for doing so, whether their girl friends approve, whether their boy friends encourage them to do so, and whether they have ever experienced any bad effects as a result.

Our first question on this problem read, *Do you drink anything stronger than beer when out with your friends?* Our next question was, *If so, what is your reason for so doing?*

First of all, we find that exactly one out of every seven boys (14.3 per cent) indulges in alcoholic beverages stronger than beer when out with his friends. However, only 3 per cent make this an habitual practice. In interpreting our findings, the reader must bear in mind that the wording of our question excludes those who indulge in alcoholic beverages only when at home. Undoubtedly this explains why 85.5 per cent say they never drink anything stronger than beer, for our question stated, "when out with your friends."

Of those who do drink when out with their friends, by far the majority come from the upper classes with the senior class alone furnishing more than half of them. Thus, it would seem that it is during the last years of high school that the boy is introduced to the practice of drinking liquor when out with his friends. Our findings on this point are confirmed by the Maryland Survey, which shows that most of the absolute gain in drinking among male youth occurs between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one. The conductors of this survey likewise found that the number who are opposed to alcoholic drink in all forms, however slight the alcoholic content, decreases steadily from four out of ten (41.3 per cent) at sixteen years of age to three out of ten (28.2 per cent) at eighteen, to two out of ten (19.6 per cent) at twenty-one.[22]

Some levelheaded adolescents are alarmed over the drinking problem among their associates. Such is the senior who writes, "I think something should be done to do away with the habit of drinking among youth. I think it is one of the most dangerous evils of the day." Another asks:

> Why do the Catholic boys drink so much? From about the age seventeen to nineteen and up they start to get drunk week ends and visit houses that ruin them morally. This is one of the greatest problems of today. Won't

[22] A. C. Rosander, "Age and Sex Patterns of Social Attitudes," *The Journal of Educational Psychology,* 30 (1939), 481–496. Also, Howard M. Bell, *Youth Tell Their Story,* 236–240.

you put this information into a book and please deal with this question for it will be much to the advantage of certain parents who don't know what is going on, and helpful to boys and all concerned. This is a problem that is your duty and the duty of all priests and teachers to combat.

This bit of advice comes from a senior in a school where Catholics are forbidden to give dances or hold social affairs of a similar nature. As a result, according to numerous similar comments, the boys in this vicinity frequent the beer gardens. They complain that getting drunk over the week end and visiting houses of ill repute seems to be "the thing to do." The writer talked to a number of young parish priests in the city where this school is located. They were partially aware of the problem and felt that much harm was being done by the prohibition of dances, but said that they could not do anything about it because those in authority were convinced that dances are wrong.

This attitude is quite contrary to the practice in vogue in some other cities where dancing is not only permitted but actually fostered by the authorities within the high school as a means of combating the immorality problem. One such high school in particular which cooperated in this study draws its students from the slum section of a large city. Moral conditions were such that something had to be done. Since the school is coeducational, the authorities hit upon the plan of having dancing every noon in the gymnasium. As a result, conditions seem to have improved somewhat, and the boys are coming to realize that God made women for more noble purposes than what their baser impulses have suggested.

In general, however, the problem of drink among our Catholic adolescents is not as serious as it was found to be in the school just referred to.

Reasons Why Adolescents Drink

The next question to be considered is the reason why adolescents drink. Our findings on this point are summarized in Table 21.

Glancing over Table 21, we note that nearly half of the boys who drink do so in order to keep or win the approval of the group. Thus, one out of four boys drinks just to be sociable or because he does not want to be different from others with whom he finds himself. One out of every five boys drinks just to show off or to act big. Those who say they like it do not say why they like it and hence fail to give an answer which we can interpret adequately. On the other hand, the boys who say that they like the taste usually explain that they do not like the bitter taste of beer but instead prefer wine or mixed drinks. Only a very few say they like the taste of whiskey. Those who say they drink for the thrill or the fun of it give evidence of a characteristic trait of adolescence, namely, a curiosity to try out adult experiences. They want to find out for themselves what they have heard talked about by adults. Or, in the words of some, they want to

TABLE 21. Reasons Why High-School Boys Indulge in Alcoholic Drinks Stronger Than Beer When Out With Their Friends (Based on the replies of 286 who drink under these circumstances)

Rank	*Reason*	*Per cent*
1.	To be with the crowd, be sociable, keep up with the gang, because others do it, so as not to be looked upon as a sissy	25.6
2.	To show off, act big, act tough, act smart	20.0
3.	Just because I like it	13.6
4.	Like the taste better than beer, agrees better than beer	12.8
5.	For the thrill of it, its effects, to feel good, to arouse my spirits	10.0
6.	To have a good time, for more fun, to see what it's like to get half tied up	9.6
7.	To forget my troubles	4.8
8.	To forget my self-consciousness and bashfulness	2.0
9.	Because I want to get drunk	1.6

"see how it feels to get pickled." The following sampling of their characteristic responses gives us a still clearer picture of why they indulge in alcoholic drinks.

To make others think I'm a big guy.
Everyone else does it and I don't want to be a snob.
In order to restore confidence when I'm disgusted or down in the dumps.
Because it makes me feel sort of unconscious and then I don't know what I'm doing.
It makes me feel like a "big shot."
Just to have a little fun but not become intoxicated.
It helps me drown my sorrows.
Just to be acting smart, not because I like the stuff.
To have a lot of fun tying one on.
In order to be in step with the rest but I really don't like it, though I dare not let on.
Merely to show off to the boys and girls I'm with.
Well, it's this way, I am unable physically to participate in sports and because of this am generally looked down upon and so the only way I can act smart is by showing them how much liquor I can hold.
To speed up leisure time and to give my ideals a rest.

Some of the boys, however, used this opportunity to say why they do not drink. Hence we have as their reasons: "I hate the stuff, can't stand it"; "Don't want to make a fool of myself"; "Won't drink unless my dad's at my side"; "Afraid I'd get into trouble"; "Do not want to ruin my life"; "I want a strong, healthy body, drinking only tears it down"; "I hate boys and girls who drink." Some even go so far as to suggest disciplinary measures, such as, "They ought to pass a law forbidding the sale of alcoholic drinks to anyone under eighteen."

Drink, a Source of Trouble

It is evident from some of the reasons quoted above that a number of adolescents who say they drink do so only in a very moderate manner. Hence we would not expect such drinking to have any bad effect upon them. To what extent, though, do our adolescents feel

that drinking has been a source of trouble for them? To get this information, we asked those who said they indulge the following question, *Has drinking liquor ever brought you any difficulties or bad effects?* The majority answered "No." One sixth of them said they did not know whether their drinking had a bad effect on them or not. But nearly three out of ten (28.3 per cent) admitted that the drinking of liquor had brought them into difficulties. We did not inquire into the nature of these difficulties, but from the volunteered remarks it is apparent that they are the well-known difficulties that are usually produced by Venus and Bacchus working in combination. This is natural, for alcohol paves the way to eroticism, not only by stimulating sexual impulses directly but by removing the inhibitions and conventions that usually safeguard chastity. Thus with the brain muddled by drink, the powers of reflection dulled, and the judgment obscured, it is no wonder that the adolescent is so likely to give way to his erotic feelings and attempt familiarities otherwise held in abeyance by his sense of decency.

We noted above that the most popular reason given for drinking was the desire to be sociable or to keep in step with the group. One of the principal elements here is a feeling of approval or pressure from the group. To what extent, though, is this feeling of wanting to satisfy the group the result of direct encouragement? To what extent are boys encouraged by the group to drink? We find our answer in the responses to the question, *Do the boys you go with encourage you to drink liquor?* More than three out of four (76 per cent) answer "No." One out of six (16.4 per cent) says "some of the boys I go with encourage me to drink"; but only 3.9 per cent say that all or the majority in their group encourage them in this practice. For a few (1.8 per cent), the question of drink had never come up, whereas several (1.9 per cent) preferred to leave this question go unanswered. One out of every five boys, then, has been encouraged by his associates to drink liquor, but as we have pointed out above, only one out of every seven has ever done so when out with his friends. This means that despite the fear of being thought different and of going contrary to the group, which is one of the strongest influences in the adolescent's conduct, three out of every ten boys who are encouraged to drink find sufficient motives to refrain from so doing.

Girls Disapprove of Liquor

Another factor that might influence the boy's conduct on the drink question is the attitude that his girl friends take toward his drinking. Hence we asked him, *Do the girls you go out with approve of a boy's drinking liquor?* Naturally this question referred only to the 1300 boys (approximately) in our study who go out with girls and hence the following percentages are figured on this basis. The variation in the respective answers to this question is very similar to that noted

in the answers to the preceding question. We saw that one fifth of the adolescents were encouraged by their boy friends to drink; we learn that one fifth (21 per cent), likewise, find their girl friends looking with approval upon a boy's drinking liquor. Only 3.4 per cent, however, say that all the girl friends they go out with approve. The majority (17.6 per cent) of this fifth modify their positive reply by saying, "some of the girls approve." A number (7.5 per cent) who answered this question did not know their girl friends' attitude on this question because the opportunity to test their attitude on this point had not come up when they were out together. But the majority again manifest a wholesome attitude, for 71.2 per cent say that the girls they go out with do not approve of their boy friend's drinking liquor.

Extent to Which Boys Are Led by Companions

A boy's companions may exert an influence on him in many other ways than in the manner discussed above. It would take us too far afield to investigate the specific direction of all these influences. However, it would be interesting to know the extent to which boys feel that their companions have had a bad influence on them in general, the extent to which they feel they have been led to do things they should not have done and would not have done had not companions influenced them to do so. Hence we asked the question, *Have those whom you go around with ever had a bad influence on you?* The number who feel their associates have had a bad influence on them outweighs the number who say the opposite. Slightly more than half (51 per cent) say that the boys they go around with have had a bad influence on them at least on several occasions. Of these, only one out of ten (10.2 per cent) says that his friends have *frequently* led him to do things he should not have done; the remaining 40.8 per cent say that they have only *occasionally been misled*. Nearly one half of the boys (49 per cent) stated plainly their companions had never had a bad influence on them.

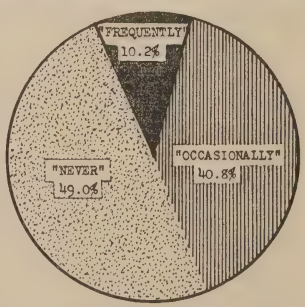

Figure 24. Have companions ever had a bad influence on you?

In comparing our data with the responses of high-school girls in this matter,[23] we find that girls appear to be more easily led by others to do wrong than boys, for six out of every ten girls admitted they had been influenced to do things they should not have done, while only five out of every ten boys admitted the same.

There is a consistent trend in the number of adolescents who say that their companions have had a bad influence on them to increase

[23] Sister Mildred Knoebber, *The Self-Revelation of the Adolescent Girl*, 125.

with the age of the boy. Thus, we find the number of upperclassmen who have been influenced in the wrong direction by companions to be 15 per cent higher than the number of freshmen who have been thus influenced. Since no age is more open to mob psychology or to the power of suggestion than the age of adolescence, we are not surprised to find that those who have lived further into this period of their life and who have therefore been exposed to more opportunities to do wrong should be the ones who are more frequently found to have been influenced in the wrong direction by companions. We can understand this influence of companions in the light of the fact that the adolescent's closest friends are very often those of his own group. And being his closest friends, they are quite naturally the most powerful in influencing his activities. They wield a vital influence in shaping his conduct in the face of opportunities to do wrong. If they be high-minded individuals, they prove a boon, but if not, a source of bad influence. For this reason the supervision of a boy's companions on the part of parents is so important and becomes an added motive for throwing open the home as a meeting place for the boy's friends.

In the light of the number (50.8 per cent) who feel that their companions have had a bad influence on them, it is interesting to note again the number who said that their parents approved of their friends. In an earlier chapter we saw how three out of ten stated definitely that their parents did not approve of all their friends, and how more than three fourths of these admitted that they did not stop going with these friends of whom their parents disapproved.[24] In other words, 23 per cent of the boys of this study are going with one or more friends of whom their parents do not approve.

On the one hand, this fact seems to cast the blame on some of the adolescents themselves for having been led into wrong by companions, for they failed to follow their parents' judgment on their friends. This is true of somewhat less than half of those who say that those whom they go around with have had a bad influence on them. On the other hand, there are more boys who admit of having been influenced in the wrong direction by the companions with whom they are presently associating (50.8 per cent) than there are boys whose parents disapprove of their friends (30.6 per cent). It would seem, therefore, that either many of the parents are neglecting the supervision of their boy's choice of companions or that they do not know the boy's companions well enough. Said one boy: "My parents ought to have warned me against the kind of boys down at the paper route station, for they are the ones that led me in the wrong track." This boy missed parental supervision. So did the sophomore who explained, "They should have watched the kind of girls and boys I went out with and they should have watched out for the places I went to."

[24] Cf. *supra*, 75–77.

Of course, a boy who may appear to be a satisfactory companion may nevertheless, in certain circumstances, influence another in the wrong direction.

Bad Language and Pressure of the Group

A specific phase of the effect of companions on a boy's conduct is their influence on his language. Many a boy acquires the habit of using improper language because his companions think it smart. In the beginning he hesitatingly blurts out his first "damn" in an attempt to simulate courage or strong manly emotion of some sort. He finds it draws a laugh of approval from his fellows and he does it again, only this time with more of an air of disdain. They approve again. He spreads his legs, stands flat on both feet, jams his hands in his trouser pockets, clears his throat with a manly harshness, expectorates from the side of his mouth, and he is all set to rip off another "damn." The crowd approves and that is what he wants more than anything else. It makes him feel secure in the group; it is his means of acquiring status.

In his mind "it shows experience with the world and contact with bold men to be able to rip out a few careless oaths."[25] From merely strong speech it is usually not long before he passes to off-color and even foul language, but only if such language is approved of by the group.

Because the adolescent is so keenly aware of and sensitive to the opinions of others, his slavishness to the practice of "following the herd" may often prove a most difficult obstacle for him in the way of breaking such a habit. Particularly is this true if the habit of using bad language is so ingrained in the group that those who do not use it are looked upon as being "sissies." Where this attitude prevails, the adolescent is faced with a problem that calls for nothing short of heroic courage on his part, for it is second nature to him to consider the "conformity" angle of his behavior before his every action.

To become acquainted with the extent to which our Catholic adolescents feel themselves faced with this problem we asked the question, *Do most of the boys you go with look upon a boy who doesn't use bad language as a "sissy"?* It is hardly necessary to add that one of the most painful experiences for a young adolescent boy is to be called a "sissy" by his fellows.

Fortunately, less than one out of ten (9.3 per cent) of the boys in our Catholic high schools are faced with this problem; but of those who are, more than twice as many are found among the freshmen as among the seniors. Furthermore, the number of boys who say that they have this problem decreases steadily from the first to the fourth

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[25] Thomas A. Clark, *The High School Boy and His Problems* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1920), 9.

year. One reason for this may be that the younger boy is usually more sensitive to the adverse meaning which boys of his age attach to the word "sissy." Then there are a certain number (5.5 per cent) who are doubtful and quibble over the word *most* in the question, explaining "some of the boys do." But the great majority (85 per cent) feel that most of the boys they go with do not look upon a boy who refrains from using bad language as a "sissy." This fits in with the general experience of maturer individuals, who will admit, even though they themselves have the habit of using bad language, that they admire anyone who has the power of controlling his tongue.

In the light of the problems we are presently discussing, namely, those created largely by the adverse influence of companions, it would be of interest to see how many of these adolescents have Catholic boys as their best friends. Our question, *Are your best boy friends Catholic?* brings us the desired information on this point. More than three out of four (78.8 per cent) reply that their best boy friends are Catholic; but more than one out of every twenty (5.5 per cent) replies negatively, indicating that his best boy friends are not of his own faith. The other 14.7 per cent (1 per cent give no answer) say that some of their best boy friends are Catholic and some of them are not. Thus, one out of every five (20.2 per cent) boys in our Catholic high schools associates with non-Catholic boys to the extent that he regards some of them as his best, or among his best boy friends. It will be interesting to keep this in mind when we consider in later chapters the magazines the boy reads, his attitude toward purity, his wishes, and the subjects which he says boys talk about most frequently when they come together among themselves.

Jealousy Among Adolescent Boys

Jealousy as usually understood is synonymous with envy which implies discontent at another's good fortune because of a feeling that one's own excellence is, in consequence, lessened. The adolescent who is jealous tortures himself without cause, morbidly holding, as he does, that the success of one or the other of his companions constitutes an evil or danger for himself. He finds it difficult to admit that others are better than he is, more talented, more sociable, more adept in sports. He may experience feelings of jealousy because his will to power is thwarted. He wants to domineer; he wants to be chosen the leader.

While the will to power is a primitive tendency in man and one of the deepest in his nature,[26] it is particularly during the period of adolescence that it runs at high tide. The realization that he has so many new powers only serves to emphasize the boy's desire to become master over all he meets. Naturally, all will not be chosen leaders; only a

[26] Rudolph Allers, *The Psychology of Character*, 29.

rare few will be elected to lead. To what extent does the thwarting of a deep-seated drive in the adolescent's nature render him jealous? We asked this question indirectly, for of all the faults of human nature, jealousy is the one an individual is least likely to admit because somehow he feels it is the mark of a small mind. Hence we asked the question, *Do you think high-school boys ever get jealous of other boys who are leaders?* In answering this question the boy reveals the presence of this problem not only in those with whom he associates but in himself as well, for it is a natural tendency to judge the reactions of others according to one's own reactions. Of course, it is quite possible that a boy may not be jealous himself and yet state that he thinks other boys are.

According to the replies received to this question, eight out of every ten boys (80.6 per cent) think that boys do get jealous, at least occasionally, of certain other boys who are leaders. Almost half of these (38.2 per cent) say that they think this is frequently true, while a few over half (42.4 per cent) feel this is the case only once in a while. However, only one out of five (19.2 per cent) thinks that boys rarely get jealous of others who are leaders.

Thus, we have some indication of the incidence of this problem among high-school boys and an indication likewise of the necessity of teaching adolescents the correct attitude they should take toward their respective abilities. Many a problem of jealousy would be alleviated, if not avoided entirely, if the boy but realized and accepted the fact that not all are created to perform the same tasks, that some are given more talents, and others less. Unless the adolescent realizes this fact, his surging will to power is liable to prove a source of trouble for him and render him a victim of the problem of jealousy. And once a victim, the disintegrating and shrinking effects which jealousy has on the personality begin to manifest themselves; he experiences more or less frequent attacks of sadness and depression, becomes angry and sullen, disgusted with himself, and even despondent. His way out of such difficulties lies only through a revamping of his philosophy of life; he must reorientate his manner of regarding not only his own position but that of others as well in the social world about him.

Feeling Misunderstood

In the realm of the adolescent's relations with others one more serious problem remains to be treated, namely, the extent to which he feels those in his social world fail to understand him. We touched on this problem several times in previous chapters[27] when we considered the extent to which adolescents felt their teachers and parents failed to understand their difficulties. We found that upwards of two

[27] Cf. *supra*, 82–86, 118–122.

thirds of the boys felt that some of their teachers did not understand their difficulties, while more than a fourth said the same about their father and somewhat above a sixth reported the same about their mother. We saw how, of all the problems facing the boy, the problem of not being understood was felt most keenly. Our present purpose in coming back to this problem is to see to what extent the problem of feeling misunderstood by others is present on the various levels of the adolescent's relations, and at the same time to find out how many adolescents are free from this problem entirely. Hence we asked the question, *Do you feel everybody seems to understand you?* This question, like the previous question, was put in the positive in order that a negative response would not be suggested.

From the replies to this question we find that only one third of our adolescents (32.7 per cent) feel that everybody seems to understand them. Nearly six out of ten (58.5 per cent) are of the opposite opinion, for they responded negatively, thus indicating a problem in this field. (See Fig. 25.) More than one in twelve (8.8 per cent) are doubtful whether everybody understands them or not.

The next question asked was, *If not, by whom aren't you understood?* From the replies to this latter question we can get an insight into the presence of this problem in the various areas of the boy's social relations.

The boy's relations with his teachers are apparently the least satisfactory, for more boys mention teachers as not understanding them than any other category of persons with whom they have to deal. This confirms our previous data in which we found that more than two thirds of the boys felt that their teachers failed to understand their problems. Second in rank, of those whom the adolescent feels do not understand him, is the boy's own father. More than a fifth of the boys (20.4 per cent) feel this way about their dad. We note that this number is slightly below the number of those who said their father failed to grasp their difficulties. This is explained by the fact that the two questions, though apparently similar, do not seek the same information; one question stresses the father's understanding of the boy's difficulties, the other stresses his understanding of the boy himself.

Third in rank of those whom the boy feels do not understand him are his boy friends. One out of five (19.8 per cent) finds a problem in this area of his social relations. Next in order of those failing to understand the boy, according to his opinion, are girl friends, mentioned by 16.6 per cent; older people, mentioned by 16.2 per cent; and mother, mentioned by 16.1 per cent. Relatives come next with exactly one out of every ten boys claiming a problem in this area.

In addition to being misunderstood by parents, a certain number of boys find themselves misunderstood by other members of the family: of the boys answering our problemmaire, 7.5 per cent feel that

their brothers do not understand them, while practically the same number (7.4 per cent) feel the same way about their sisters. Only 3.2 per cent, however, say that nobody understands them. For these latter few who are entirely maladjusted socially, the prospect of life is apparently dark and dreary.

Therefore, the average boy feels he is least understood by his teachers and best understood by his brothers and sisters, with his parents, boy friends, and girl friends occupying a position somewhere in between.

In previous questions we learned that the main reason boys offered for being misunderstood by teachers was that their teachers did not know them well enough, were too poorly acquainted with the boy's private life, his thoughts, feelings, and troubles. Parents failed to understand them because they did not really know the boy, and they did not realize what he had to face. Now, what are the reasons that the students advance for being misunderstood by their boy friends, girl friends, and others, excepting parents and teachers, with whom they have to deal?

Reasons Boys Give for Not Being Understood by Friends

We asked the boys what they thought was the main reason for their friends not understanding them. A fair number who claim they are not understood by their friends do not know why this is and some are plainly bewildered by the fact; others give no answer at all. The great majority, however, state that it is simply because boys are different; they have different ideas, different viewpoints, a different slant on life. Some likewise explain that boys do not understand each other because of differences in character and interest.

Because others do not know the boy well enough, do not understand his difficulties, and do not understand his motives for acting the way he does, ranks second as a reason why boys feel their friends do not understand them. In offering this reason many of the boys had their girl friends as well as older people in mind. The boys complain that girls get jealous so easily and "want to have you all for themselves and get sore if they see you with another girl." Others add that girls do not understand a boy's roughness. "They think a boy is rude when he is rough but it is only natural for him to be that way."

The boy's shyness ranks third as a reason while his peculiar and queer way of acting ranks fourth. The reason ranking fifth places the blame squarely on the boy's own shoulders: he is not understood because he "shows off" too much and thus hides his true self. Other reasons advanced less frequently indicate that it is the boy's own fault because he is indifferent, too proud, not frank enough, too changeable.

The following sampling of the boy's explanations of why he is misunderstood will throw added light on the question.

If a fellow looks forward to the future and lives his present life in view of it he is usually misunderstood.

I can't seem to find out why this is.

Because everybody worries about himself and doesn't see the other fellow's side of the story.

Because girls are so jealous, they want you tied to them and don't want to see you with anyone else.

His shyness prevents them from seeing him as he really is.

Consider the boy a bunch of bull and don't bother about him.

I have built an outer person around myself and that's why they don't understand me as I am.

A boy does strange things in order to make himself noticed and others do not understand this.

Others merely see the outside of you, but your thoughts on the inside are what count.

Girls seem to look upon me only as a chum rather than as an ardent admirer.

I'm not understood because my thoughts run in different channels, I'm different.

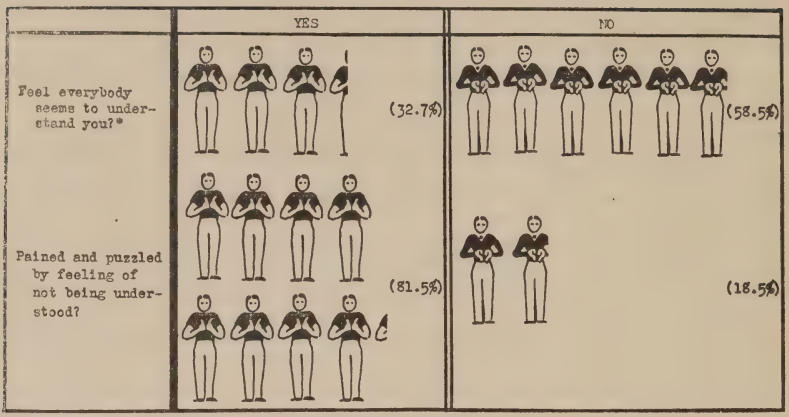
Because boys differ from girls and from one another. Each has his own ideas and his own opinions.

Underlying the majority of reasons which the adolescent advances for not being understood by friends seems to be his conviction that he differs from others; he feels that he is an individual who thinks his own thoughts and that others do not understand or experience what he experiences. It would seem that many of the adolescent's problems which grow out of his feeling of not being understood would be lessened considerably if he were somehow led to understand that he is not as different as he thinks he is; that, in general, most other boys experience very much of what he experiences and hence he is not as forsaken or closed in and different as he may be led to believe.

The fact that the adolescent is midway between the shores of boyhood and manhood, with no place to cast anchor, only emphasizes all the more his need for understanding. As we mentioned before, because of the changes going on within him, he feels so uncertain and insecure. He grasps at friendship as a means of stabilizing himself; he feels the need of a steadying hand. When these friends do not see eye to eye with him, he feels that it is because he is different. Thus he is led to think that they do not understand him, and by so thinking he magnifies all his other problems. It is because of his inability to find security where he had hoped to find it that the feeling of not being understood proves so painful to him.

Being Misunderstood, a Problem for Boys and Girls

The ratio of those who are pained and puzzled by the feeling of not being understood to those who are not pained at all by this feeling



*Eight per cent answered this question with "I don't know."

Fig. 25. Misunderstanding and its effect on the adolescent. Each symbol represents the replies of 10 per cent of the high-school population.

is more than four to one, 81.5 per cent as against 18.5 per cent. (See Fig. 25.) Nearly one out of every seven (13.5 per cent) complains that such feelings puzzle and pain him very much.

In comparing our findings with those of Sister Mildred Knoebber[28] on this point, we note that boys and girls react very much the same to the feeling of being misunderstood: the great majority of both say that they are puzzled or pained by the problem. While we found that 81.5 per cent of the boys who were faced with this problem were pained or puzzled by it, Sister Knoebber found that 81.4 per cent of the girls who felt they were frequently misunderstood admitted the same.

We are not surprised that such a large number are pained by not being understood, for throughout our problemmaire the boys' comments stressed repeatedly their longing for sympathy and understanding. Adults who handle the adolescent with a sympathetic and understanding hand will do much toward helping him stabilize himself and gain the security he needs so much in order to face other problems with calmness and confidence. Unless he finds such understanding, his adventures in social adjustment, instead of bringing him to a fuller development of personality, will serve only to complicate and cramp this development.

[28] *The Self-Revelation of the Adolescent Girl,* 69.

Chapter 13

THE BOY IN HIS LEISURE TIME

In the preceding chapter we found that the majority of boys were not satisfied with the leisure-time social activities provided by the parish and the school. They complained either that the parish and the school ignored their needs in this field entirely, or that the activities provided were too infrequent and inadequate. In this and the following chapter we shall investigate some of the leisure-time activities of the boy in which it is possible for him to engage independently of adult provision, namely, reading, daydreaming, conversations, and attendance at movies.

With the problem of leisure becoming more and more of a challenge to parents and educators alike, it seems appropriate in a study of the problems of the adolescent to examine some of the boy's more important leisure-time activities, especially those which he can engage in by himself when and usually where he pleases. What a boy does during his leisure time is often the best key to his character and a good indication of how well he has learned to occupy himself wholesomely during his free moments. It is likewise an indication of how well he is being trained to exercise his own resourcefulness and how well he will be able to utilize the leisure time that will come to him in increasing abundance with the years as the processes of production are speeded up still further by laborsaving devices. The boy who does not know what to do with his leisure time in his teens is at a disadvantage, for not only does he readily become bored with life and a victim of brooding, but may prove a source of danger to himself. Having time on his hands, he experiences the truth of the old saw that an idle brain is the devil's workshop.

Adolescents Find Leisure Time Wearisome

To what extent are our high-school boys so unresourceful and dependent on others for their entertainment as to be bored by their free time? To find an answer to this query, as well as to get an insight into the extent to which our schools are actually preparing the coming generation to enjoy, profit, and become enriched by their new leisure, we asked the following question, *Do you ever find your leisure time wearisome?* To this question over half of the boys (51 per cent) replied in the affirmative indicating that they find their leisure time wearisome, at least at times; while more than a fourth of these (13.2 per cent) stated that they regularly find their free time

a problem on their hands. As usual, a few failed to respond but the rest (47.3 per cent) replied that only rarely do they find their leisure time wearisome. (See Fig. 26.)

Inspecting the patterns of response on the various age levels, we note a small but significant trend for more and more boys to find their leisure time wearisome as they grow older. This is apparently in keeping with the findings of a number of other studies[1] on the play interests of adolescents which seem to indicate a waning of participation in play interests during this period. Dimock[2] found that there is a channeling of play activities during this time with a tendency for boys to do more things alone as they grow older. This change of leisure-time activities would seem to explain then, at least in part, the tendency for more of the older boys than the younger to find their leisure time wearisome. It seems that it takes the older boys some time before they find substitute activities which are as satisfying as some of the group activities which they engaged in a few years previously.

Figure 26. Find leisure time wearisome?

There are many factors that may be responsible for a boy's finding his leisure time wearisome, but regardless of the factors which may enter, it seems an indictment against the school and the home when half of the boys do not know how to employ to their own satisfaction the unoccupied moments of their day. If their resourcefulness for self-entertainment is so shallow that they cannot bear to be alone with themselves, who is to blame but those who have charge of their training? Of course, the school is not entirely to blame, for the whole development of modern times is partly responsible. Even adults do not know how to spend their leisure — many are dependent on others for their amusement.

Failure to Meet the Challenge of Leisure

The reason for such a sad condition may be seen, though not entirely, in the neglect of emphasis in the present curriculum on training for the proper use of leisure time. Emphasis is placed on training for a livelihood, not on training to live a life. The curriculum is mapped out to give maximum vocational training, with little thought to avocational training. Yet our goal should be to train so as to prepare everyone to derive the maximum satisfaction and contentment out of living. Education must be for unemployment as well as for employment, for with the mechanization of industry the amount of

[1] Paul H. Furfey, "Pubescence and Play Behavior," *American Journal of Psychology,* 41 (1929), 109–111. Also, Harvey C. Lehman and Paul A. Witty, "A Study of Play in Relation to Pubescence," *Journal of Social Psychology,* 1 (1930), 510–523.

[2] H. S. Dimock, *Rediscovery of the Adolescent,* 259.

the world's work per capita is rapidly becoming less and less, thus increasing the available leisure time more and more. Already one half of a man's day is left for leisure-time activities, and some writers do not hesitate to predict in the not too distant future a working day of only two hours.[3] As leisure time increases, education for leisure becomes ever more important than education for labor.[4] As a result, schools must shift their emphasis from training pupils how to earn a living to training them how to live. Why should education limit itself to preparing the individual for only half or less than half of his life?

With one half of our adolescents in high school unable to find satisfactory ways of spending their free time, what can be expected from them when they become employed in industry where they push a button or pull a lever for six or eight hours a day? Modern work is becoming more and more a series of routine movements, monotonous, uninteresting and as far as the worker is concerned, meaningless. While at work, the individual's personality is stifled; no outlet is provided for initiative or self-expression. Modern work may develop a man physically, but it neglects the development of that which makes him essentially a man and leaves him with a sense of emptiness and dissatisfaction. This fact is true of millions today; their work is just a means of sustaining life, and, as Robert M. Hutchins has pointed out, "the life that is sustained is lived apart from the activity by which it is sustained."[5] Such a life is no life unless enriched by other activities which the day's work cannot supply. It is during his leisure time that the individual can engage in those wholesome and necessary activities which are not part of his work.

Training is requisite to the profitable employment of leisure time. Hobbies and interests must be cultivated, skills and arts must be developed while the man of tomorrow is still the boy of today. Unless individuals are trained in the use of leisure, leisure becomes a further problem as is only too evident in the drab lives of the millions of workers and unemployed trudging the streets and lining the park benches in our larger cities. The greatest fear of many a man is to have time on his hands; it affects him mentally. It breeds worry, despondency, mischief; and mischief breeds trouble, vice, rebellion.

Leisure is not a good in itself; it is a curse or a blessing, an opportunity for self-improvement or self-indulgence depending on how it is employed. It is a strange commodity that has overwhelming potentialities for either discontent or happiness. It should be welcomed as an outlet for the creative drive of our nature and as an opportunity to put order into our lives, enriching ourselves morally, spiritually, and intellectually. Leisure is really an opening for activity of a higher order

[3] Arthur N. Pack, *The Challenge of Leisure* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1934), 13.

[4] J. E. Rogers, "A Challenge to Education," *School and Society*, 48 (1938), 208–209.

[5] "Education and Democracy," *Forum*, 103 (1940), 15–17.

where we can exercise our highest faculties without the interference of bodily toil, and thus attain to the fullest development of our personality. But this again depends on resourcefulness and training in the use of leisure.

We Play to Work, Not Work to Play

Our present findings do not indicate that the school and the home have been entirely successful in meeting the challenge of the new leisure. Our data seem to indicate either that the training for the constructive use of leisure time is neglected by many agencies responsible for the education of our youth, or that the training which is offered is failing to take root in at least half of the adolescents exposed to it. Perhaps that is partly due to the fact that leisure is not yet in the American philosophy of life. There is too much of the "go-getter" spirit of the pioneer days of expansion still coloring our way of looking upon the employment of time; we still regard nonproductive activities in the old economic sense. There is too much of the old attitude in the air that leisure is synonymous with idleness and unproductivity. Teachers and parents are too busy pointing out to the boy how men became captains of industry because they never lost an idle moment, forgetting that the days of rank individualism are gone forever. Too few grasp the idea that leisure is merely the interruption of a form of monotonous activity in order to replace it with a form of activity of a more soul-satisfying nature. Too few realize that we play to work, not work to play.

As our data show, at least half of our boys pass through our schools unprepared to turn to advantage the leisure time which is coming their way in increasing abundance. They spend their unwelcome leisure sleeping, daydreaming, playing cards, going to the movies, driving up and down the highways catching glimpses of the countryside between billboards, but seldom turn to account their higher capacities which would leave them with a feeling of enrichment.[6]

In so far as our data are representative, it would seem that the average high school is neglecting to take into account a problem which is not only serious in the adolescent's present life, but which will become even more serious in his life that lies ahead. Under present conditions, our schools are faced with the situation of training more and more people to do better and better work in an industrial system that requires less and less of them. Consequently, people find more and more time on their hands; but, because of our failure to adapt their training to the changed industrial conditions, they come out of our

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[6] In an investigation of the leisure-time activities of nearly 10,000 youth, McGill and Matthews report that only 19 per cent of the boys and 11 per cent of the girls had enjoyed a well-balanced program of leisure-time activities during a sample week. *Youth of New York City*, 218.

schools with less and less capacity for using leisure time constructively. Homer P. Rainey paints the present picture thus:

> It seems that we are faced with the conclusion that for the vast majority of workers in the future their jobs will be merely routine, operative types of employment requiring little or no skill or special training and offering little satisfaction that comes from doing a piece of work that requires intelligence and skill. If this is true, it means further that the great body of workers must seek their major satisfaction in life outside of their employment, in avocational and recreational activities.[7]

Unless preparation for a worthy use of leisure time is given more consideration in our schools, we will not be adequately preparing our students to meet what promises to be one of the greatest problems of the future.

The Home and Training in Leisure

Not all the responsibility, however, rests on the school. The home too has its share, for it is at home that high-school boys spend most of their leisure time. According to our findings, six out of ten (60.7 per cent) spend half or more of their leisure time at home. More than one out of five (22.7 per cent) spends three fourths of his free time there.[8] Only a tenth (10.3 per cent) of the boys say that they spend "scarcely any" of their leisure time at home while one out of four (26.5 per cent) says he spends a fourth of his free time there. Thus, parents can scarcely escape the responsibility which falls to them of guiding the boy in the use of his leisure when he is so near to them most of the time. While conditions have forced the school to train the adolescent to employ his free time profitably and to create interests it is the responsibility of the home to see that this training is put to use.

No doubt economic reasons stand in the way of some parents in fostering a worthy use of leisure time on the part of their son. On the other hand, some parents are plainly neglectful while others fail to realize the necessity of leisure and consequently do not appreciate the need for training in its use. They do not appreciate with Rousseau that "man must have time to eat his bread with gladness." They do not grasp the full meaning of the Third Commandment which really gives the key to the purpose of leisure.[9] They work and scrape to give their son a vocational training so that he will be able to earn a livelihood later on and thus be happy, but bring him only half the loaf of happiness; the richer half comes only to the one who has received training in the use of leisure, a phase of their son's education they are presently overlooking. If parents are to do their utmost in assuring

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[7] "What Is the American Youth Problem?" The *Annals* of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 194 (1937), 18–24.

[8] Cf. *supra*, 57–58.

[9] Ernest Graf, O.S.B., "The Use of Leisure," *The Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, 39 (1938), 275–277.

their son of that satisfaction and content which is the only lubricant that can keep the wheels of the human machine running smoothly, they must cooperate with the school in providing adequate opportunities for developing in their son those leisure-time habits which give self-expression to the higher capacities of his being.

Furthermore, by providing an outlet for their son's creative urge, they will render his present life all the more rich and satisfying. The adolescent needs to experience that sense of achievement and those healthy stirrings of joy that reverberate through his whole system, when through his own efforts, he gives birth to something creative even though trivial.

In the life of the adolescent, joy is as essential as the air he breathes. Or as Dr. Kirsch puts it, "As no flower can develop properly without the sun, so our young people cannot develop properly without joy."[10] Without joy the adolescent finds life unbearable. He must have joy, and if reality deprives him of it he seeks it in the realm of unreality. He withdraws from the harshness of life about him into a phantasy world of his own creation where he rides as the hero, conquering all obstacles, achieving the impossible, cresting the waves of satisfaction and joy that surge through his being as his charger, imagination, gallops on through the world of reverie.

The Daydreams of the Adolescent Boy

The adolescent finds it so much fun to daydream. In reality his daydreaming is a pathetic effort to get something for nothing, but to him it is like opening a magic door which leads into a new world where there is no pain or sorrow, no misunderstandings, no buffetings from a harsh reality. His reveries are a means of escape from the depressing insecurity which he experiences within his own ego into a land where everything happens as he wishes, where all his problems are solved, and where the future which looms up before him as a vague, fearful threat fades into a primrose path of successive triumphs.

The nature of this actual world is such that most of the adolescent's cravings are denied satisfaction. The laws of reality are stronger than the stretches of his imagination. Little scope is given for his efforts at compensating for his state of subordination to others, or for his attempt at balancing his subjectively experienced feelings of incompleteness. But his will to power will not be downed, and so he seeks his compensations and satisfactions in the world of phantasy.

It is quite natural that those faced with problems on all sides have recourse to phantasy, but to what extent do normal adolescents have recourse to this land of make-believe? In the trial administration of our problemmaire we found that practically all adolescents said that

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[10] Felix M. Kirsch, O.F.M.Cap., *Sex Education and Training in Chastity* (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1930), 340.

they spent some time every day daydreaming. Hence, in its final form, our question investigating the extent of daydreaming read, *How much time per day do you generally spend in daydreaming?*

Amount of Time Spent in Daydreaming

Our findings on the amount of time adolescents spend per day in daydreaming are presented in Figure 27. At the outset it might be said that less than one out of twenty boys (4.5 per cent) declares that

Figure 27. Amount of time adolescents spend per day in daydreaming. Each symbol represents 5 per cent of the high-school population.

he does not daydream at all, or at least not every day. All the others indicate that they spend from five to ten minutes up to six or more hours per day daydreaming. The average time per boy spent each day in daydreaming is over a half-hour, but the median time is about twenty minutes. The reason for this is that the majority of boys spend less than a half-hour each day daydreaming. Over one out of every five boys (21.5 per cent), however, says that he daydreams a

half-hour a day; one out of eight (12.2 per cent) says that he spends an hour a day daydreaming. The largest single response (34.5 per cent), however, is that of the boys who say they spend only between five and ten minutes a day in this way. More than a fifth of them (21.4 per cent) spend between fifteen and twenty minutes a day in this pastime, about the same number as those who build castles in the air a half-hour a day. Then there are somewhat more than one twentieth of the boys (5.9 per cent) who live in the world of phantasy for two hours or more every day.

In studying the differences in response for the various age levels we note a consistent trend for the older boys to do more daydreaming than the younger boys, though all do a considerable amount of it. First of all, we find only one third as many seniors as freshmen who say that they do not engage in daydreaming everyday, 11 as compared with 32. Second, fewer seniors than freshman report daydreaming only five to ten minutes a day. This tendency for a boy to spend more time in woolgathering as he advances through the high school is consistent all the way through; for example, 240 freshmen out of 500 say they spend only five to ten minutes a day daydreaming, as compared with 190 sophomores, 151 juniors, and 126 seniors who report the same. That the older boys spend longer periods in daydreaming is further evinced by the number who say they spend an hour a day in this activity: the number of freshmen thus reporting is 40, sophomores 51, juniors 64, seniors 85.

Our findings here are interesting and admit of a bit of comment in view of our previous data. Our results agree perfectly with the accepted view that adolescents have recourse to daydreaming when the problems of reality become too severe. We have noted on a number of occasions that the adolescent tends to feel he is faced with more and severer problems as he becomes older. Certain changes have not begun to affect his life as yet as a freshman and therefore he has not as yet been faced with the necessity of making the consequent adjustments. But as life unfolds, he becomes aware of the thousand and one adjustments which he must learn to make if he is to assume the responsibilities which the future holds. Therefore, in the light of the modern cultural pattern which makes growing up such a difficult process, and in the light of our previous data in which we found the older adolescent to feel himself faced with more problems, it would seem to be only a natural correlate that the older adolescent should likewise be the one who resorts more frequently to the land of imagination.

Effect of Daydreaming on the Adolescent

What effect, though, does this daydreaming have on the adolescent? At the outset it might be stated that it is a mistake to think that all daydreaming is harmful. It is much better for the adolescent to

experience an occasional, imagined victory than never to have the experience of triumph at all. As long as daydreams keep in touch with real life, serving as a stimulus to enterprise and an occasional relief from the trials of life, they have a good effect. And when accompanied by well-directed action, they lead to a constructive attack upon one's problems and thus help toward a fuller realization of personality. That type of daydreaming in which one recalls past experiences and builds them into new plans and schemes for the future has always been the source in which those who work with their heads (inventors, artists, writers) have found the very stuff of which their greatness is built. Thus, under certain conditions, adventures in phantasy prove a source of rest and relaxation from which the mind returns with new ideas and new courage to carry on in the real world of problems.

But, for the adolescent, because he usually indulges in daydreams when opportunities for the right kind of action are not present, daydreaming is also always a precarious adventure. It is such an easy and agreeable way of escaping from difficulty that it may easily grow into a fixed pattern of retreat from life's rebuffs.[11] It is so easy to be swept away past the curtained walls of the imagination that it may prove difficult after a while for some to get back again or, like Peter Pan, they may want to play forever in this world of delight and never get back to earth. As Allers points out, "Losing touch with reality is always attended with danger,"[12] for the individual loses both the practical good that comes from making effort and the grinding, wholesome effect of reverses, which prime one for making one's way in life. Not only does the habit of daydreaming lead to the neglect of duty, but it teaches one gradually to accept the vapid victories of fancy for the real though generally denied victories of fact. Moreover, daydreaming is fraught with moral dangers for the adolescent. It usually means surrendering to his lower and less noble appetites. Says Bakewell Morrison:

> In the daydream the ideals are lowered and the appetites for sensuous things are put in the saddle and given the reins. Idly, effortlessly, half-consciously the animal in us is given its bent and allowed to roam and please itself. . . . The dreams of lustful things or acts are so persuasive, so apparently innocent — in the sense that they involve no other in reality — so easily adopted and so hardly banished when once they have made themselves at home in the mind . . . so likely to be sticky. This drifting on the wings of the half-conscious fancy makes our responses to illicit affections and to illicit sensation — venereal pleasure — decidedly heartier for it puts the animal in charge; it makes one look with a new interest, feel with a new intensity, estimate with a new standard, judge with new leniency. It lowers the mind almost with deadly sureness from "higher things." And this elusive flight from reality, this unwholesome daydreaming may make

[11] Leta S. Hollingworth, *The Psychology of the Adolescent*, 191.

[12] Rudolph Allers, "Daydreams and Sexuality," *The Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, 39 (1939), 469–475.

one sly and furtive, for we often suspect that another suspects whereon we think if the thinking is not noble.[13]

With more than 95 per cent of our students admitting that they spend some time every day daydreaming, parents and leaders of youth must recognize the problem and face it squarely. But this does not mean that the boy must be treated harshly, for if the adolescent is rebuked for daydreaming, he will only withdraw further into the world of phantasy. Dealing with the adolescent on this problem is a challenge to the adult's patience, sympathy, and tact for it is so easy for the adolescent to elude one's grasp. The adult must get the boy to live more and more in touch with reality. Active work or play should be encouraged and wholesome interests should be aroused. In a word, the idea is to attack the source of the daydreaming by giving the boy opportunities to taste achievements in activities which he feels are worth while, and he will find no need to look for satisfactions of a fictitious character.

About What Do Boys Daydream?

But what are the subjects about which the adolescent daydreams? Are they all, as some writers would suggest, of the erotic type? Or are most of them of the "ego-boosting" variety as G. H. Green[14] suggests? Our findings on this point are rather revealing, as evinced in the answers to the question, *What do you most frequently catch yourself daydreaming about?* Our purpose in asking this question was to get some insight into the extent to which the adolescent's daydreams are of the morbid, dangerous type as well as to gain additional information on the adolescent's mental life.

Our findings are set forth in tabular form to enable the reader not only to judge for himself both the gravity and the extent of the subjects about which the adolescent daydreams, but also to trace the response trends which reflect the developmental pattern of the adolescent's mental life.

A number of interesting implications can be seen in these data. First of all, Table 22 offers another proof for the validity and reliability of our findings. If the subjects of this study were not answering truthfully it would show up in a table such as this. For example, in a previous question we asked them to indicate the time they spent in daydreaming. We found that the older they were the more time they spent in this pastime. This same trend is again consistently revealed when they tell us of the subjects about which they daydream. We cannot fail to note that a greater variety of topics enter the dream world of the senior than of the freshman. Nor

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[13] *Character Formation* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1938), 190–191 and 142–143.

[14] *Psychoanalysis in the Classroom* (New York: G. Putnam's Sons, 1922) 42–43.

TABLE 22. Subjects About Which High-School Boys Most Frequently Catch Themselves Daydreaming

Subject	*Freshmen*	*Sophomores*	*Juniors*	*Seniors*	*All classes*
Girls: about them and relations with them..	19.6%	27.2%	31.8%	35.2%	28.5%
Being a hero; about myself, being popular, successful, famous	17.1	19.6	21.6	19.3	19.4
Sports: playing in various games, making clever plays	16.2	18.2	19.1	18.3	18.0
Future career, what I'm going to do	14.0	14.4	14.8	20.2	15.9
Plans for immediate future: what I'm going to do that evening or over the week end	5.8	6.8	7.0	7.4	6.7
Social activities, dates, good times	3.6	4.2	6.8	9.8	6.1
Impure things, sex, sexual relations	4.0	6.1	4.6	4.2	4.7
Cars, airplanes, machines: driving them or working on them ..	2.9	3.4	3.6	3.1	3.3
The out-of-doors	3.0	2.6	2.0	2.4	2.5
School, difficulties	2.4	2.2	2.4	2.6	2.4
Money, riches	2.0	1.4	2.1	3.0	2.1
Miscellaneous: traveling, movies, boy friends, home, things I'd like to have, future wife, romance, eats	9.2	7.1	8.0	8.2	8.1
Unclassified: things in general, events	10.4	9.0	6.2	6.4	8.0

can we fail to observe how the number who daydream about girls jumps from one out of five among freshmen to more than one out of three among seniors, or how the number of seniors who engage in wishful thinking about dates and social activities is more than two and one half times as great as the number of freshmen who do the same, and how these findings check perfectly with general observation as well as with psychological knowledge of the adolescent.

From these results it is evident that the principal subjects about which the boy daydreams are: girls, himself, and his future, with himself being the central figure in at least 50 per cent of these phantasies; for when he is daydreaming about sports or of being a hero, it is really to his own imaginary activities that he is directing his

thoughts. Thus, it would seem that the majority of the boy's daydreams fall into two general classes: those that center about the other sex, and those that center about himself as playing the role of a hero.

To what extent the boy's daydreams about girls are synonymous with sexual thoughts we have no absolute way of knowing, but from a study of individual papers it is apparent that for very many the presence of the thought of girls in the daydream is the first step toward less noble thoughts. Nearly 5 per cent, however, mention specifically that the most frequent subject of their daydreams is impurity. Thus, we may say that in one third of the boy's daydreams, sexuality is either explicitly recognized as such or is implicitly present. This is not surprising for as Allers tells us, the daydream needs some portion of reality for a basis. "The adolescent no longer possesses the faculty which enabled him as a child to build up an imaginary world without any real substratum whereupon to base it. . . . Sexuality which is always at hand, always ready to awaken, supplies this basis of reality."[15] In this way a vicious circle is established linking daydreams and sexuality. To quote Allers further:

> Daydreams afford satisfaction to sexual longings, and sexuality supplies a basis and a starting point for daydreams. Not seldom bad sexual habits spring, not immediately from an excessive desire nor even from "weakness of will," but from the wish to withdraw into the pleasant world of dreams and to escape the unpleasantness of reality. And in quite a few cases it is more necessary to combat the tendency for dreaming than to direct the attack against the sexual habits themselves.[16]

Thus we see the underlying psychological reason why daydreaming is a dangerous occupation, especially for adolescents whose passions are so easily stimulated.

Another point which we cannot escape noticing in our analysis of the subjects of the adolescent's daydreams is the frequency with which the seniors mention their future career. One out of every five daydreams most frequently about what he is going to do in the years that lie ahead, thus making his future the second ranking subject of his dreams. This of course is to be expected from a group, the majority of whom will have to assume adult responsibilities within a year or two.

A few of the boys' own statements will give us an idea of the heroic feats about which the boy daydreams. Some of the students remark: "I daydream about being an All-American star going off tackle for 70 yards to win the game in the last few seconds of play"; "About beating up on boys I don't like with my girl friends looking on"; "Crashing through the center of the line for a spectacular touchdown"; "About saving somebody, or being the center of a very refined circle

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[15] "Daydreams and Sexuality," *The Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, 39 (1939), 469–475.

[16] *Loc. cit.*, 471.

of men and women"; "Being a hero in the sight of my companions"; "Of being the inventor of an international artificial language, 'Internasio.' "

Others say they daydream about "Dancing with Marion and holding her close to me"; "Riding on a policeman's horse directing traffic"; "Talking with the girl I love and listening to her caressing baby talk"; "Being a big shot riding around in a yellow coupe"; "Myself as a great general or the fortieth President of the United States"; "Being a great Diesel motors engineer and making 'wads' of money"; "Of having a home of my own, a good job, and a wife and children." Still others say they daydream about "Almost anything from girls to mechanical things"; "Girls I would like to go out with"; "Pretty girls I have seen"; "Girls I have seen in shows and pictures"; "Girls of all kinds." While some are quite blunt and say they dream about "Girls in undress," "Sexual intercourse," "Sexual things," "Impurities," and "Sex, the dirty side."

Thus the boy quite frankly reveals to us his inner life. We catch a glimpse of the direction certain forces are taking in his thinking, what principles are gradually being woven into his philosophy of life, how Catholic training is taking root or failing to take root in his thought life.

Innermost Interests of the Boy Revealed

Another favorite leisure-time activity of the boy, and one that likewise reveals much of his inner life, is his conversations with his companions. It is self-evident that when a group of impulsive and effusive adolescents get together by themselves with no restraining influence to check them except their own conscience, they are going to do a lot of talking and about those things that are on their mind, their problems, worries, ambitions, the things in which they are interested, the things they admire, the things they would like to do. Perhaps the shortest way an adult could take to become intimately acquainted with the adolescent would be to become a silent and unobserved listener-in on his conversations with his companions. Vouchsafed such a privilege, he would be wafted immediately into the inner life of the boy. The boy's interests, desires, ideals, and motives would be revealed to him. He would get an insight into the forces at work in the boy's thought life, what evaluations he was learning to make, and what influences were gaining ground in his life.

It was for the purpose of allowing the adolescent to take us behind the scenes of his own life as silent listeners to his conversations, and thus reveal to us his inner self, that we asked him the question, *What are the topics most frequently talked about among boys?* His responses are most frank and are made without the least sign of hesitation. So frank, in fact, were some of them that we would not dare to reproduce them in the exact words as given.

Interesting trends in the boy's conversations and gradual changes of interest which his conversations reflect are revealed when we study separately the replies to this question given by those on the different levels within the high school. For this reason we present our findings in Table 23. The figures in this table are based on the replies of 2000 boys who make nearly 6000 mentions of subjects which they most frequently talk about among themselves. Most of these subjects fall within the range of a half dozen different topics: sports, girls, school, dates, sex, and movies, in the order mentioned.

TABLE 23. Topics High-School Boys Most Frequently Talk About Among Themselves

Rank *Topic*	*Freshmen*	*Sophomores*	*Juniors*	*Seniors*	*All classes*
1. Sports	62.0%	80.2%	75.0%	75.1%	73.3%
2. Girls	53.6	67.6	70.6	80.0	68.0
3. School, studies, teachers	27.0	27.2	29.0	27.3	27.6
4. Social activities, dates, good times	9.6	16.0	20.1	24.2	17.5
5. Sex, sexual relations, dirty jokes	11.2	12.4	16.4	20.1	15.0
6. Movies	16.4	10.4	9.0	7.6	10.9
7. Current happenings	7.6	7.9	7.1	10.6	8.4
8. Cars, airplanes, machines	5.4	8.2	7.4	7.0	7.0
9. Generalities	7.4	5.0	4.1	6.4	5.7
10. Other boys	5.4	4.2	3.3	3.4	4.1
11. One's experiences	6.0	3.2	2.0	1.6	3.2
12. Hobbies	2.5	3.2	4.4	2.0	3.0
13. Job or work	1.0	1.8	2.0	6.1	2.7
14. Money	1.2	2.8	3.0	3.1	2.5
15. Things one is going to do	1.9	2.0	3.4	2.2	2.4
16. Future vocation	1.2	1.4	1.6	4.7	2.2
17. Miscellaneous: religion, clothes, homes, eats, etc.	4.0	2.2	3.2	4.3	3.4
18. No answer	3.4	1.6	.8	.4	1.6

It will be noted that the two principal topics boys talk about most frequently are sports and girls. These two subjects are often mentioned together in combination with a third subject, such as: "girls, facts of life, sports," "sports, girls, school," "girls, movies of the week, football."

Differences of Interest Between Younger and Older Boys

Nearly three out of every four boys mention sports as one of the three topics which they most frequently talk about among themselves,

while almost as many, seven out of every ten, mention girls as the topic of most interest when among themselves. Among freshmen, "sports" is almost always the first topic mentioned, while among seniors, "girls" is the most frequent subject of first mention. The freshmen appear to be much more limited in the variety of the subjects of their conversations than the seniors, for one out of every three freshmen who lists "sports" mentions at least one athletic game in addition, indicating that he tends to confine his interests to one field. Thus, freshmen who talk about sports tend to talk about sports exclusively, or if they talk about cars, they are likewise inclined to mention "airplanes and machines." This is seldom the case among the older students who show a greater variety in their subjects of conversation.

A developmental factor is quite in evidence in the consistent increase with age in the number of boys who find girls the central

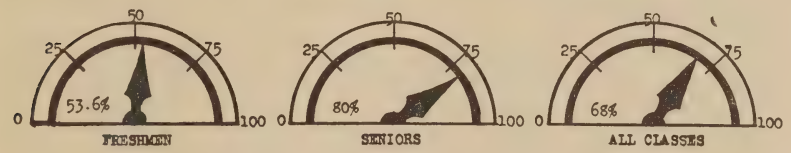

Figure 28. Girls: the central topic of conversation.

topic of their familiar chats. The number who find girls the chief topic of conversation jumps from roughly one out of two among freshmen to eight out of ten among among seniors. (See Fig. 28.) These figures indicate the growth of interest in the opposite sex that takes place during the high-school period. This same growth is evinced in the number who talk about dates and sex. It is interesting to note that many a boy who mentions sex and impure things as the subject which the boys in his group talk about most frequently expresses in his wishes a desire for purity and "a good clean girl." One such senior is puzzled by the talk of his companions and asks, "Are the boys I hear talking of impure things as impure as they claim or is it mostly talk?"

Interests of Boys and Girls Compared

In comparing our findings with those of Sister Mildred Knoebber on interests of girls,[17] we note that girls are almost as popular as a subject of conversation among boys as boys are among girls, for 72 per cent of the girls listed boys as the topic they most frequently talk about among themselves. The only topics of conversation in

[17] *The Self-Revelation of the Adolescent Girl*, 122.

which boys and girls show about the same degree of interest are movies and sex. But even here there is a variation worthy of note: the movie of the week is one of the frequent topics of conversation among 10.9 per cent of the boys and 15.3 per cent of the girls. More boys than girls, however, find sex a leading topic of conversation, 15 per cent as compared with 11.9 per cent.

On most other topics, boys' and girls' interests are widely divergent. For instance, only 40.9 per cent of the girls talk about the combined topic of sports and social activities, while 73.3 per cent of the boys talk about sports alone. Whereas 21.4 per cent of the girls find the topic of clothes to be of most interest to them, less than one per cent of the boys converse to any extent on this subject. A difference of interests is also evident in the number of girls who frequently chat about current events (1.3 per cent) and the relatively larger number of boys (8.4 per cent) who do the same. Still other subjects in which their interests differ widely are machines, in which boys are rather interested, and love and marriage, which girls find more to their liking.

One might expect politics and economics to fascinate the student at this moment. However, these subjects apparently are scarcely discussed at all. It is in reference to this point that the difference between the average American and European adolescent is most striking.

Magazine Reading

Next to conversing and daydreaming, the leisure-time activity in which the adolescent can most readily indulge when, where, and as often as he likes is reading. Bell,[18] Dimock,[19] and Gorsline[20] found reading to be the most time-consuming leisure-time activity in which young people engage. And Homer P. Rainey[21] in reporting on the leisure-time pursuits of over 13,000 youth says that the average spends about two hours per day in reading. Cook and Goodrich[22] report that the high-school boy spends an average of 40 minutes a day on reading other than reading connected in any way with the schoolwork. Our own findings show that 85 per cent of the boys read on an average of three magazines regularly. Our data corroborate other findings which indicate a growing trend toward extensive reading on the secondary level.

With modern commercialism fostering an atmosphere which renders

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[18] Howard M. Bell, *Youth Tell Their Story,* 162.

[19] H. S. Dimock, *Rediscovering the Adolescent,* 61.

[20] Robert Gorsline, "Pupils Testify to Leisure-Time Activities," *School Review,* 39 (1931), 208–212.

[21] "How Can Libraries Help to Meet the Needs of Youth?" *School and Society,* 46 (1937), 257–261.

[22] I. M. Cook and T. V. Goodrich, "How High School Pupils Spend Their Time," *School Review,* 36 (1928), 771–779.

idleness ever more dangerous, it is perhaps fortunate that adolescents are tending to spend more time in reading, for it is precisely during the secondary period that there is a big decrease of participation both in organized club activities and in active physical play.[23] But whether this growing zest for reading is fortunate or not depends on what our adolescents are reading, for as they read so will they think and as they think so will they act. Everyone becomes like that about which he thinks.

As Kirsch has pointed out, "We are part of all we meet in our reading."[24] Everything we see, read, feel, or experience is stored in our subconscious memory, ready to be used as a weapon for or against us, depending on whether what we saw, read, or heard was wholesome or not. Judging from recent investigations of reading interests of high-school students, it would seem that much of their reading is of the unwholesome kind. Rothney and McCaul[25] found that even among the better type of public high-school boys, 44 per cent read such vulgar magazines as *Snappy Stories, Bunk,* and *Ballyhoo.* Others[26] believe that in some sections as high as 50 per cent of those over fifteen read little else but cheap story magazines. Anita P. Forbes, in a recent address at Boston before the National Council of Teachers of English, affirmed that "90 per cent of high school students read 'pulp' magazines, the contents of which are a menace to the morals of our boys and girls."

Types of Magazines Read

There can be little doubt that if this increased amount of leisure time which high-school students are devoting to reading is spent on vulgar "escape literature," much harm is being done, and we have a problem which calls for an immediate remedy. It was for the purpose of seeing to what extent this problem is present among our Catholic high-school boys that we asked them to list, in the order of preference, the magazines they read regularly. Because of the variation of reading tastes on the different levels within the high school, we present our findings in detail so the reader can see for himself the extent to which these differences exist.

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[23] H. S. Dimock, *op. cit.,* 17.

[24] Felix M. Kirsch, O.F.M.Cap., "There's Something About a Book," *The Catholic School Journal,* 40 (1940), 68–69.

[25] J. W. Rothney and R. L. McCaul, "Reading Preferences of High School Boys," *The English Journal,* 27 (1938), 650–660.

[26] Sister M. Immaculata Kramer, O.S.B., "The Reading Preferences of Pupils," *The Catholic Educational Review,* 37 (1939), 310–325.

TABLE 24. Types of Magazines Regularly Read by High-School Boys

Rank Type of Magazine	Per cent of all magazines read	Freshmen	Sophomores	Juniors	Seniors	All classes
1. Picture (*Life, Look, Pic,* etc.)	14.5	28.8	35.6	41.8	44.0	37.6
2. Popular story (*Colliers, Saturday Evening Post, American, McCall's*)	11.7	22.8	26.0	31.6	39.4	29.7
3. Catholic (all kinds, *Catholic Boy, St. Anthony's Messenger,* mission magazines, *Catholic Digest*)	9.1	34.2	20.6	17.6	22.0	23.6
4. Boy (*Boy's Life, Open Road for Boys, American Boy*)	7.4	26.2	24.0	15.2	12.4	19.5
5. Sports (*Street & Smith Sports, Sports Review,* "Dime Sports")	6.8	12.8	16.8	19.4	21.2	17.6
6. Popular science (*Popular Mechanics, Popular Science*)	6.4	18.0	19.0	15.4	13.6	16.5
7. Story (*Doc Savage,* adventure type)	6.0	9.6	12.2	18.8	20.6	15.3
8. Love (*True Story, True Romances, Liberty, True Experiences*)	5.3	10.2	10.4	15.4	18.6	13.7
9. Detective, mystery (*Real Detective,* pulp thrillers)	4.5	9.2	11.8	12.6	11.0	11.2
10. Sex, trashy (*Spicy Stories, Film Fun, Whizbang, Silk Stocking, Esquire, Ballyhoo*)	4.4	8.6	10.6	11.8	12.8	10.8
11. Digest (*Reader's, Science*)	4.2	4.0	8.2	13.0	16.0	10.3
12. Aviation (*Airways, Flying Aces, Sky Fighters, G-8 & His Battle Aces*)*	3.9	8.4	14.0	9.0	8.2	9.9
13. Comic (*King Comics*)	3.2	12.8	10.2	7.2	2.0	8.1
14. News (*Newsweek, Time*)	2.8	5.8	7.0	7.8	10.2	7.7
15. Outdoor sports (*Field & Stream, Outdoor Life*)	2.4	5.8	5.4	7.2	6.0	6.1
16. Instructional (*Better Homes and Gardens, Scholastic, National Geographic*)	2.4	3.0	7.0	7.2	6.8	6.0
17. Western (*Wild West, Western Thriller*)	1.9	5.0	4.0	5.2	4.6	4.7
18. Movie (*Silver Screen, Movie Mirror*)	1.7	2.2	5.2	5.6	5.0	4.5

* Since our active participation in the war, adolescent interest in aviation magazines has increased considerably.

TABLE 24. (Cont.)

Rank	Type of Magazine	Per cent of all magazines read	Freshmen	Sophomores	Juniors	Seniors	All classes
19.	Hobby (stamp magazines, model airplane, radio, popular photography)	1.4	2.0	3.8	4.8	3.4	3.5
None, or none regularly			11.8	10.0	9.2	9.4	10.1
No answer			7.2	4.8	3.6	4.8	5.1

A study of Table 24 will reveal a number of interesting facts. First of all, we note that 85 per cent of our high-school adolescents do read magazines regularly and that they average three magazines each. The majority of the 10 per cent who say they do not read them explain that they do not stick to any one magazine regularly but read different ones. Many of those who indicate they read no magazines state that they read books instead, or as one boy explained, "I don't read any magazines because my father doesn't want me to read them."

But in considering those who do read magazines, we are struck by the large number who regularly "read" the picture variety (37.6 per cent — more than one out of every three boys), and how the ratio of those who prefer this type of magazine, which calls for little effort on the part of the reader, increases to nearly one out of every other boy by the time the adolescent reaches the senior year.[27] The fact that picture magazines are the most popular, constituting more than one seventh of all the periodicals read by our high-school adolescents, agrees well with the findings of Center and Persons[28] who conclude that 70 per cent of the high-school students of a large city read the tabloid papers. What makes this situation a problem for the sensitive adolescent is explained by the boy who says, "I wish they would not be permitted to publish those picture magazines because they show pictures that excite one to sin." Not all adolescents are as fortunate as the freshman who explains, "I read *Life* but my mother always looks through it first." Besides the moral dangers which

[27] When it is recalled that in New York State (where school standards are among the highest in the nation) The Regents' Inquiry found that 7 to 9 per cent of the state's high-school graduates included in its study and more than 30 per cent of the pupils withdrawing from high school could not pass an eighth-grade reading test, it is no wonder that so many take their reading in pictures. R. E. Eckert and T. O. Marshall, *When Youth Leave School,* The Regents' Inquiry (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1938), 88–89.

[28] S. S. Center and G. L. Persons, "The Leisure Reading of New York City High School Students," *The English Journal,* 25 (1936), 717–726.

certain pictures may present to the adolescent, reading of such magazines (in the sense of thumbing through for the pictures) fosters a habit of mental inertness which proves an obstacle in developing a relish for the better and more deeply satisfying type of magazine literature.

Only second to picture magazines are the popular ten-cent magazines. Though the low price is undoubtedly the principal reason why this type of periodical ranks so high on the boys' list of preferences, the story element has its appeal. Had we combined into one group all the magazines whose principal appeal is the story element, this group would have headed the boys' list of reading preferences; but we chose to keep the less popular general story magazines separate because the more popular of these latter are of the pulp variety. Hence, we have an additional 15.3 per cent who read story magazines of the type of *Doc Savage* whose principal element is adventure. All together, then, story magazines make up more than one sixth of all periodicals read by high-school boys, with the older boys reading nearly twice as many magazines of this type as the freshmen.

Catholic publications of all kinds, whether of story, mission, digest, or pietistic type, constitute less than one tenth of all the magazines read by our Catholic high-school boys. About one out of every five boys, however, mentions a Catholic magazine among those which he reads regularly. Over half of all those who read Catholic periodicals mention the *Catholic Boy,* a magazine whose stories appeal particularly to freshmen and sophomores. This likewise accounts for the large number of freshmen, as compared with the relatively small number of upperclassmen, who read Catholic periodicals. Other popular Catholic magazines are those of the type of *St. Anthony's Messenger,* while the *Catholic Digest* ranks only a poor third. If one Catholic magazine can be made dominantly popular with our younger adolescents through a bit of cooperation on the part of interested teachers, it seems that some of our other representative Catholic magazines could be made just as popular with our older adolescents if the proper approach were made.

Trends in Reading Preferences

Some shifts in the reading interests of high-school boys are shown in Figure 29. For example, boy magazines are read regularly by twice as many freshmen as seniors; however, sports magazines are read by almost twice as many seniors as freshmen. Our findings on this latter point are supported by Brink's study of the reading interests of high-school pupils[29] in which he found the number of those interested in magazine articles featuring sports to jump from 12 per cent among

[29] Wm. G. Brink, "High School Pupils' Interests in Magazines and Newspapers," *School Review,* 48 (1940), 40–48.

freshmen to 17 per cent among seniors. Our data on this point are very similar. The number of those who regularly read sports magazines jumps from 12.8 per cent among the freshmen to 21 per cent among the seniors. Thus an increase of interest in sports is indicated as the boy advances through high school.

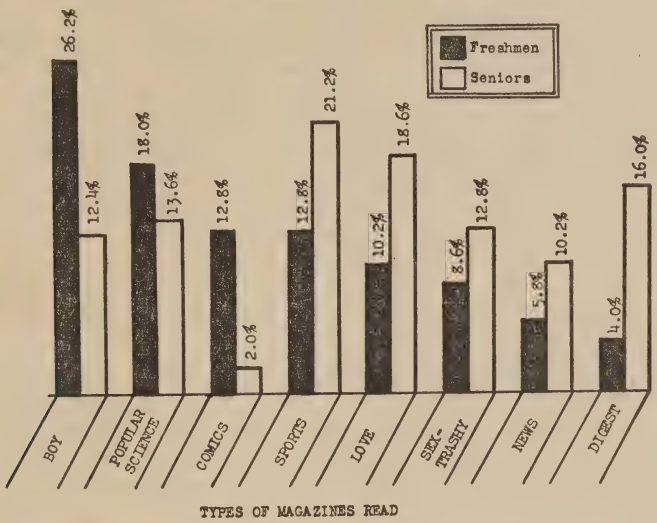

Figure 29. Shifts in reading interests of high-school boys.

Interest in magazines of the love, trashy, news, and digest types also increases with age. Love magazines and news magazines are read by nearly twice as many seniors as freshmen. Digest magazines are read by four times as many seniors as freshmen.

Interest in popular science and comic magazines tends to decrease with age. Younger boys appear to be more mechanical-minded than the older boys and hence are more interested in periodicals featuring popular mechanics. The biggest change in reading interest, however, takes place in the field of humor. Comic magazines are read by six times as many freshmen as seniors, 12.8 per cent as compared with 2 per cent. Brink likewise found that interest in humor decreased with age.[30]

Those Who Play With Fire

Looking over our findings, it would appear that Catholic high-school boys are less addicted to reading the trashy type of magazine than are the average public high-school students. According to our findings, one out of every ten boys (10.8 per cent) regularly reads a magazine which has as its dominant theme sex luridly portrayed.

[30] Wm. G. Brink, "Reading Interests of High School Pupils," *School Review*, 47 (1939), 613–621.

This is far less than what some other studies[31] found to be the case among public high-school students, where as many as 40 to 50 per cent read the sex type of magazine. A word of caution, however, must be inserted here with respect to the interpretation of our data. Magazines which we listed as trashy are definitely of the type which have as their major purpose to play up sex in a lurid form. Actually, therefore, in our enumeration of trashy magazines, the amount of reading of a trashy nature in which our adolescents indulge is underestimated, for quite a number of the magazines listed as love, detective, and movie types in reality contain much which is written from the sex-appeal angle. Yet, because such magazines have love, mystery, and the movies ostensibly as their major theme, they were listed as such. No one would deny, however, that such magazines as *True Story, Real Detective,* and *Movie Screen* do not deserve to be regarded as having trashy tendencies.

Glancing over our data in this light, then, we find that trashy magazines constitute nearly 16 per cent of all the magazines read by our high-school students.

On the other hand, Catholic magazines constitute only 9 per cent of all periodicals read and they are regularly read by only 23 per cent of the high-school students. The conclusions we are tempted to draw from these two sets of figures are not at all a compliment to the results which have been achieved in our teaching boys to appreciate wholesome literature.

Inspecting our previous table from the point of view of learning what percentage of the adolescent's magazine reading is by and large unobjectionable, we find that scarcely 60 per cent fits into this category. It would seem that at least 40 per cent of the magazines which he now reads either have or are liable to have a harmful effect upon him because of the questionable nature of their content. And what makes matters worse, there is a tendency for the number of adolescents who indulge in this objectionable type of leisure-time reading to increase with age.

Thus, even in high school, we see the branching out of the roots of a reading habit which is proving to be one of the greatest tragedies of our nation, the prostitution of brain power as witnessed by the millions who waste time, effort, virtue, and intelligence mulling over the vapid experiences of immoral heroines alluringly portrayed in picture and in print in the stream of frivolous, if not downright pornographic, magazines pouring forth from America's presses and newsstands.

Influence of Leisure-Time Reading

If we have dwelt at length on the subject of the boy's leisure reading, it is because of the great influence which such reading has on the

[31] Cf. *supra,* 237.

development of youth. What food is to the boy's body, that reading is to his mind, and as tainted food disrupts the smooth functioning of his body, so, too, poisonous reading disrupts the smooth running of his life on a higher level. More specifically, the question of the boy's reading is important because the adolescent tends to set up his own standards of social conduct, not only according to his personal contacts, but according to the public opinion he encounters in his reading;[32] and he strives with might and main to measure up to these standards, giving little thought to their morality, for to him their appearance in print is accepted as proof of their being "scientific." And being scientific is the equivalent in his eyes of being up to date. Hence, the boy's reading must be supervised just as closely as his choice of companions. The text of the Bible that asserts "He that walks with the wise shall be wise," but "a friend of fools shall become like to them," is just as true of one's reading as it is of one's companions.

Our consideration of the boy's magazine tastes should make us more aware of our obligations in this field, and should acquaint us better with the source of many a boy's problems. A senior says, "I don't read magazines because they prove an occasion of sin for me." A junior, while admitting that he regularly reads three magazines of the sex-appeal type, explains, "I've tried as hard as possible to quit reading dirty magazines but I cannot keep away from them." A freshman writes, "I think all sex articles should be kept out of magazines and newspapers because they cause impure thoughts." The statements of these boys point to a few of the major difficulties that may take their rise from the boy's reading habits.

If 85 per cent of our adolescents are regular readers of magazines, we would expect the majority of them to enjoy reading during their leisure time. This is actually the case as we learn from the replies to our question, *Do you enjoy reading during your leisure time?* Eight out of every ten boys (79.7 per cent) affirmed that they did enjoy such reading, at least occasionally. Only 41.5 per cent, though, said that this was *frequently* the case with them. It is quite apparent that many had the reading of books in mind when they answered this question, for this query preceded by several questions our investigation of their magazine preferences.

The fact that 20 per cent of the boys said they did not enjoy reading during their leisure time may indicate that the schools are failing to develop a proper appreciation of this leisure-time activity in one fifth of their students.

Reading Enjoyment and Influence Compared

A further question was asked on the boy's reading, namely, *Do you think your reading influences you very much?* The responses to this

[32] Raphael McCarthy, *Training the Adolescent*, 104.

query throw an interesting light on the relation between the enjoyment of reading and its influence on the boy's life. Offhand the bulk replies show that nearly six out of every ten boys (57.8 per cent) feel that their leisure-time reading influences them very much; 30.8 per cent, however, do not think so, while one out of every ten is doubtful about the influence which his reading has upon himself. But this bulk treatment of the replies does not tell us the extent to which the boy who enjoys his reading tends to be influenced more than the boy who does not like to read. Hence we studied the answers to the above question in the light of the responses to the previous question on the extent to which boys enjoy reading.

Table 25 shows the extent to which the factor of the enjoyment of reading tends to affect the influence such reading is likely to have on the reader.

TABLE 25. Influence of Reading on Those Who Enjoy Reading During Their Leisure Time

Do you think your reading influences you very much?	*Do you enjoy reading during your leisure time?*					
	Yes frequently	*(41.5)**	*Occasionally*	*(38.2)*	*No*	*(20.0)*
Yes (57.8%)	81.2%†	(33.7)	54.2%‡	(20.7)	17.0%§	(3.4)
No (30.8%)	12.5	(5.2)	31.1	(11.9)	67.0	(13.4)
Uncertain (10.0%)	5.8	(2.4)	14.2	(5.4)	11.0	(2.2)
No answer (1.4%)	.5	(.2)	.5	(.2)	5.0	(1.0)

* Figures in parentheses are percentages figured on the basis of 2000, and indicate the incidence of the respective reply in the general high-school population.

†) Percentage figured on the basis of 830 who replied that they "frequently" enjoy reading.

‡) Figured on the basis of 760 who replied that they "occasionally" enjoy reading.

§) Figured on the basis of 400 who replied that they do not enjoy reading.

According to the above table, it is apparent that there is a direct correlation between the extent to which the adolescent enjoys reading and the influence such reading has upon him. More than eight out of ten who regularly enjoy leisure-time reading state that they are influenced very much by it, but only one out of six of those who do not enjoy reading feel that their reading influences them. In other words, the chances that reading will exert a considerable influence on the reader are nearly five to one in favor of those who enjoy reading over those who do not. Conversely, the chances that reading will have no influence on the reader are more than five to one if he does not enjoy reading. The slight difference in ratio is due to the fact that some reported that they were uncertain of the influence which reading has upon them. It will also be noted that leisure-time reading has less influence on boys who only occasionally enjoy it than it has on boys who frequently enjoy it. However, reading has more influence

on those who occasionally enjoy it than on those who never enjoy the pastime. These facts also seem to indicate that there is a direct correlation between enjoyment of reading and the influence which the adolescent feels reading has upon him.

The implications of these data are obvious. On the one hand, it would seem that the type of reading which has the greatest influence on high-school adolescents is the reading of magazines, for, as we noted above, it is precisely magazine literature which the majority enjoy. On the other hand, it is apparent that teachers of English have a pressing problem to meet in developing in the adolescent not only a relish for good reading but, more precisely, an appreciation of proper magazine literature. Little is gained, even though our schools are turning out a generation of the most rapid silent readers ever produced, if so many of our English teachers continue in the so-called scientific method of dissecting literature instead of developing a sense of appreciation for it. If the major portion of the future reading of our young people is going to be done from magazines and newspapers, why not teach them while in school what to read in magazines and how to appreciate the better kind of periodical literature? At the present time too much of the individual's magazine reading is left to haphazard choice and has dire effects upon his spiritual life.

Chapter 14

MOVIES IN THE ADOLESCENT'S LIFE

In addition to the leisure-time activities of the adolescent already treated in the foregoing chapter, attendance at movies is another favorite pastime of high-school boys. As in their reading, the boys find in the movies a fruitful source of many of their principles of conduct. But because of the vividness with which characters are portrayed on the screen, movies are likely to have an even more prepossessing influence than reading.

Frequency of Attendance at Movies

In studying the part movies play in the adolescent's life, the extent to which they influence him and the extent to which they complicate his problems, we asked a series of ten questions, the responses to which we shall take up in order in this chapter. A fundamental point in considering the influence of motion pictures in the adolescent's life is the frequency with which he attends them; hence, our leading question, *How often do you usually go to the movies?*

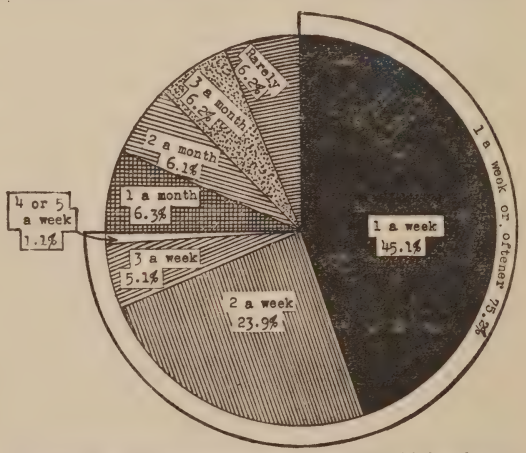

Figure 30. Frequency with which high-school boys attend movies.

The replies to this question are graphically presented in Figure 30. Nearly half of the high-school boys (45.1 per cent) attend movies once a week; nearly a fourth (23.9 per cent), twice a week; 5.1 per cent, three times a week; .8 per cent, four times a week; and .3 per cent, five times a week. The remaining fourth of the boys (24.8 per cent) attend movies less than once a week, according to the following frequencies: 6.3 per cent go once a month; 6.1 per cent, twice a month; 6.2 per cent, three times a month; and 6.2 per cent, very rarely. No one, however, said that he never went to the movies.

In other words, three out of every four boys (75.2 per cent) in our Catholic high schools attend the movies once a week or oftener, with the average boy attending 1.2 times per week, or 4.9 movies per month. Our findings correlate very closely with the principal studies[1] reported in this field, including the Payne Fund Study[2] in which 71 per cent of the high-school boys were found to attend the movies once a week or oftener, averaging 1.1 times per week, as well as with Sister Angela Horan's study[3] of the Catholic high-school students of Indianapolis in which she found 78 per cent attending the movies weekly or oftener. Further similarity between our findings and those of the Payne Fund Study are noted in those who go once a week, 44.8 per cent as compared with our 45.1 per cent — a difference of three tenths of one per cent — and those who go three times per week, 6 per cent as compared with 5.1 per cent in our findings, pointing once more to the validity of our data.

In comparing the movie attendance of Catholic high-school boys with that of Catholic grade-school children, it would appear that the younger children attend more frequently.[4] We found this same tendency to continue, though to a lesser degree, on the high-school level. Finally, Sister Mildred Knoebber[5] found that 3000 high-school girls averaged 1.4 movies per week or 5.6 per month, as compared with our boys who averaged 1.2 and 4.9 respectively.

Suitability of Movie Programs

Although we have no direct evidence from our study indicating how these boys attend the movies, other studies[6] point out that less

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[1] The six principal studies between 1929 and 1936, including the Payne Study, that of Alice Mitchell in Chicago, one at Huntington Beach, Calif., one in Scotland, and two in England, found between 68.5 per cent and 81 per cent of the young people attending movies once a week or oftener on the average. H. H. Punke ["Leisure-Time Attitudes and Activities of High School Students," *School and Society,* 43 (1936), 884–888] found that 1920 high-school boys averaged 5.1 movies per month, as compared with 4.9 per month in our data. More recently, Claude A. Shull ["A Study in Suitability of Motion-Picture-Theater Programs to the Needs of the Child," *The Journal of Educational Sociology,* 13 (1940), 274–279] found that 73 per cent of 28,123 children, ages nine to fourteen, attended movies once a week or oftener.

[2] Edgar Dale, *Children's Attendance at the Motion Pictures,* Payne Fund Studies (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1935), 36–41.

[3] *Movie Attendance and the Legion of Decency,* Unpublished Study (Indianapolis, Ind.: Diocese of Indianapolis, Office of the Chancellor, 1938). In a previous study [*An Investigation of the Ideals of Present-Day Adolescents,* Unpublished Master's Thesis (Terre Haute, Ind.: Indiana State Teachers College, 1937)], Sister Rose Angela found that 73 per cent of the Catholic and public high-school boys attended movies once a week or oftener.

[4] Sister Rose Angela Horan (*Movie Attendance and the Legion of Decency*) found that 80 per cent of 2821 children, fifth to eighth grade inclusive, went to the movies once a week or oftener.

[5] *The Self-Revelation of the Adolescent Girl,* 116–117.

[6] Edgar Dale, *op. cit.,* 19.

than 7 per cent of the boys fifteen years old and older are accompanied by their parents and that 62 per cent of the boys thirteen years and older attend the movies with their youthful friends, while one fourth of them go to the movies unaccompanied by anyone. Thus, with almost nine out of ten attending the movies either alone or with a companion who could hardly be called a chaperon, it is quite evident that the influence movies are likely to have on the adolescent is to a large extent determined by the content of the movie. While the Legion of Decency has done much to elevate the general moral tone of the movies, much still remains to be accomplished; for an analysis of current programs over a year's time — based on the judgments of a dozen previewing groups in Hollywood and New York, among whom are the Legion of Decency and the American Association of University Women — indicates that slightly more than one out of five programs is rated as suitable for family attendance, while nearly 37 per cent contain definitely adult material wholly unsuitable for young people.[7]

Moreover, the Payne Fund Studies pointed out definitely not only how the movies present extremes as if they were the norm (thus producing a distorted concept of life), but likewise how they overemphasize crime, love, and sex to the extent that one's chances of seeing a crime picture rated one in four, a love picture one in three, and a sex picture one in seven, crime and sex thus accounting for the principal themes of two fifths of all the pictures produced. Before proceeding with the presentation of our findings it may be well to take a brief glance at the content of the motion pictures which our high-school boys are attending in such large numbers.

An Analysis of 115 Pictures

In an analysis of 115 pictures, it was discovered that 84 per cent of them portrayed crimes, with an average of four crimes per picture, a single picture depicting as many as 25 crimes.[8] And what makes such presentation especially unwholesome is the fact that fewer than one fifth of the crimes depicted are punished. A similar analysis revealed that lovemaking occurred in 90 per cent of the pictures, with intense lovemaking appearing in 70 per cent of them, the average portraying at least five cases per picture. While there may be nothing intrinsically wrong in making love, what renders the lovemaking patterns of these pictures so dangerously influential with adolescents is the fact that the majority are of the passionate kiss-and-embrace type with more than half of these scenes taking place in the auto-

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[7] Claude A. Shull, "A Study in Suitability of Motion-Picture-Theater Programs to the Needs of the Child," *The Journal of Educational Sociology*, 13 (1940), 274–279.

[8] Edgar Dale, *The Content of Motion Pictures*, Payne Fund Studies (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1935), 133.

mobile or bedroom.[9] Furthermore, illicit love is the goal of the leading characters in one fifth of the pictures, ranking sixth of all the goals for which leading characters are portrayed as striving; crime for gain ranks fifth, while winning another's love ranks as the prime motivating force of all characters.[10] But even here the adolescent is bewildered by a distortion of reality; for example, love at first sight is the case for the leading characters in 60 per cent of the pictures, whereas love as the fruit of friendship over a period of time (which is more true to life) is found in only 5 per cent of them.[11] Not only that, but the boy is further wrongly impressed by the fact that, whereas in life 60 per cent of men and women marry, on the screen only 15 per cent of the men and 21 per cent of the women are thus united.[12]

The adolescent runs into other snares when he finds three fourths of the pictures portraying characters in scanty clothing, with these characters being women in 60 per cent of the pictures. If he indiscriminately attends movies, his chances of being confronted on the screen with the leading lady in her lingerie is one in four, while the chances are one in two that scantily clothed feminine characters will be flashed on the screen some time during the picture.[13] Furthermore, he can expect to see intoxication portrayed in 43 per cent of the pictures[14] and vulgarity in 65 per cent of them, each picture containing on an average three such incidents. In one third of the pictures this vulgarity hints at improper sex relationship and in an additional 25 per cent of them vulgar reference is made to the human body.[15]

Such is, in brief, the picture of screen entertainment as given to us by the most thorough study of the movies yet undertaken. Such are the pictures by and large which three fourths of our Catholic high-school boys go to see once or oftener each week.

Reasons Why Boys Go to the Movies

Before we take up the influence which our boys feel movies have on them, we shall consider the reasons they give for attending movies. (See Table 26.)

As would be expected, the majority go to the movies to be entertained and to pass the time. It seems rather unfortunate, however, that nearly three out of ten find their leisure time so poorly provided for that they go to the movies as a means of escape from idleness. It is not surprising that one out of twelve goes for the principal purpose of learning about life and to see how things are done, for at this age the boy is being introduced to a realm of life somewhat new and strange. He is on the lookout for hints which will aid him in his new

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[9] *Ibid.*, 95–98.
[10] *Ibid.*, 178.
[11] *Ibid.*, 86.
[12] *Ibid.*, 112.
[13] *Ibid.*, 74.
[14] *Ibid.*, 167.
[15] *Ibid.*, 156.

TABLE 26. Reasons Given by 2000 Catholic High-School Boys as to Why They Go to the Movies

Reason	*Per cent*
1. For entertainment, enjoyment, pleasure, amusement	49.5
2. To pass the time, to have something to do, to use up my free time, nothing else to do, to have a place to go to	28.9
3. To learn things, to get different viewpoints and an outlook on life	8.4
4. Just to see a good picture	6.8
5. For relaxation, rest; recreation, to ease my nerves	6.6
6. To see my favorites, to see pretty girls	4.8
7. To escape from my troubles, noise, routine, to make me forget	3.7
8. Good place to take a "date," to be with my girl, good place to neck	3.0
9. Because I like them, get thrilled	1.8
Miscellaneous: for the adventure, for the music, to have something to talk about	2.5
No answer	2.3*

* Totals more than 100 because one fifth of the boys gave more than one reason for attending the movies.

adjustments, especially those in his love relations. He is seeking suggestions which will help him to become popular, "striking," and correct.

For a rather small number that find in the movies a means of escape from harsh reality, the motion picture is evidently a blessing, at least for their peace of mind. Such it is for the sophomore who says: "When troubles pile up and I get downhearted and sad, I see a good picture and come out in a better mood and look at everything in a clearer light." But for an almost equal number who go to the movies because of the opportunity it affords "to kiss, hug, pet, and hold hands," it is anything but a blessing. Some actually admit that they take their girl friends to the movies because of the passionate response stimulated by certain scenes. Blumer found the same to be true in his study: "Some young men deliberately employ passionate motion pictures as a means of inducing a greater attitude of receptiveness on the part of their girl companions. Such behavior points further to the fact that the influence of motion pictures in arousing impulses and feelings and lessening ordinary self-control is being recognized and sometimes utilized."[16] The implications of such behavior are better understood when we realize that the emotional reaction of the average adolescent to a love picture, as measured with a psychogalvanometer, is twice as great as that of an adult. His normal pulse rate of 80 beats per minute increases to double this rate and in in-

[16] Herbert Blumer, *Movies and Conduct* ("Payne Fund Studies"), (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1935), 114.

tensely passionate scenes is found to go even higher. A physical imprint is left on his psychophysical self lasting as long as 70 hours and some recover normal composure only after three days.[17]

For the adult a movie is just another picture, but for the adolescent it is a transcript of life which he enters into rather completely. As one adolescent phrases it, "They [the movies] work you up into a daze so that you imagine yourself in the scenes on the screen and feel what they feel." Thus lost in the sweep of the drama, feelings are violently stirred, impulses ordinarily latent or restrained are released, images are vividly fixed, and appetites are whetted. As a result of such strong emotional experiences, the adolescent boy is quite likely to experience subsequent temptations which at times may be extremely difficult to resist.

Types of Movies Preferred by Adolescents

The data in Table 27 offer further evidence of the adolescent's enthusiastic response to movies, for very few of the boys were able to confine their choice of the kind of movie they liked best to a single type. Many liked so many that they simply said they "liked several." The average high-school boy rates 2.3 different types of movies among those he likes best.

TABLE 27. Types of Movies Preferred by 2000 Catholic Boys on the Different High-School Levels

Type of movie	*Freshmen*	*Sophomores*	*Juniors*	*Seniors*	*All classes*
1. Mystery	48.8%	46.6%	42.6%	38.2%	44.1%
2. Musical comedy ..	33.2	34.2	42.6	45.8	39.0
3. Comedy of manners	27.2	31.6	30.6	24.4	28.5
4. Historical	23.2	20.4	26.6	25.1	23.8
5. Gangster-G men ..	25.2	23.2	17.6	17.0	20.9
6. Western	24.8	18.0	12.6	10.0	16.4
7. News	15.6	13.4	14.0	12.6	13.9
8. Love story	6.4	8.8	11.8	15.2	10.6
9. Educational	10.2	7.2	10.2	11.4	9.7
10. Travel	6.0	8.0	8.4	7.6	7.5
11. "I like several" ...	13.4	18.2	15.8	15.6	15.8
12. No preference	1.6	2.2	3.6	3.4	2.7

It is interesting to note how the boy's preferences for certain types of movies vary with his age. The love-story and musical-comedy types consistently gain in favor as the boy grows older. The musical comedy is preferred to all other types of movies by one out of three freshmen and almost one out of every two seniors. The love-story movie is the first choice of three times as many seniors as freshmen. A loss of interest as the boy grows older is consistently evinced, however, in the mystery, gangster-G men and Western types of pictures. The

[17] *Ibid.*, 74–94.

seniors who prefer the cowboy type of movie are fewer than half the number of freshmen who prefer the same. Another point worthy of noting is the sudden drop in the number of seniors who prefer slapstick comedy. It will be remembered that older boys also found humorous reading material less appealing than the younger boys found it.

But in general, mystery pictures are the most popular with high-school boys, followed in order by musical comedy, the ordinary comedy, historical movies, and the gangster and Western types of pictures.

More interesting and more important than the types of movies preferred by adolescents is the influence which movies have upon them. On the one hand, one would not expect the movies to have a deep influence on them because the majority attend the movies ostensibly just for sheer entertainment. On the other hand, one might expect exactly the opposite, not only because of the vivid portrayal on the screen of specific conduct patterns in definite problem situations which parallel very closely problems in their own lives, but because the individual unconsciously tends to regard as commendable, and therefore imitable, that which is attractive. Another reason for expecting such an influence is the evidence offered by the Payne Fund Studies, that after six weeks' time, high-school students still remember 88 per cent of what they saw in the movies and that even after three months the amount retained is about the same.[18] More specific evidence that movies profoundly affect young people is presented by Shuttleworth and May, who show this influence by comparing a group of movie-going with nonmovie-going children,[19] and by Blumer and Hauser, who illustrate the effect of motion pictures on delinquency. For example, they point out how 31 per cent of the boys that they studied claimed that movies had incited them to daring escapades, how 49 per cent of a group that had been caught blamed the movies for giving them their first desire to carry a gun, and how 28 per cent of this same group said that movies had incited them to practice "stick-ups."[20]

Influence of Movies on Boy's Life and Conduct

To what extent and how are our Catholic high-school boys influenced by the movies? We put the question to the boys themselves in this way, *Have the movies ever influenced your conduct, actions, or way of thinking?* and then followed it immediately with, *If so, in what way?*

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[18] H. J. Forman, *Our Movie-Made Children* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1933), *passim.*

[19] F. K. Shuttleworth and Mark A. May, *The Social Conduct and Attitudes of Movie Fans,* Payne Fund Studies (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1933), 12–26.

[20] H. Blumer and P. M. Hauser, *Movies, Delinquency, and Crime,* Payne Fund Studies (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1933), 71.

In considering the replies to these questions it may be well to remember that the influence of the movies is quite subtle and very often on the unconscious level, with the movie-goer quite frequently not realizing the extent to which he is being influenced. Perhaps the more common influence is of the type that consists of the implantation of ideas, ideals, and attitudes; but this does not make the influence a whit less real, for ideas, ideals, and attitudes are directive of the type of conduct which may follow. Despite the fact that much of the influence of the movies is likely not to be recognized by the person himself, it is nevertheless interesting to see to what extent high-school boys recognize this influence.

In their reply to our first question, we learn that nearly half of the boys (47.6 per cent) feel that they have been influenced by the movies. Only a fourth of them (27.7 per cent) deny such influence, while another fourth (24.2 per cent) are uncertain as to whether they have been influenced or not. As usual, just a few failed to reply. But of those who have been influenced, 7.6 per cent feel that the movies have influenced them very much.

How Adolescents Say They Are Influenced

Now, in what ways have the boys been influenced? Most of the replies to this question were quite individual. Some say that after seeing a "crook" picture they go out of the theater feeling tough, that they turn up their coat collar and squint at people out of the corner of their eyes as if they were going to "stick 'em up." Some say that love scenes make them "more pensive and more desirous of being lovable and cuddly," that such scenes make them want to go out and experiment, that they "stimulate sex feeling to the fever point," that sensuous scenes play havoc with their emotions and "induce the idea of wildness and of being 'hot.'" Others simply say they experience a craving to imitate what they see on the screen.

Because of the individual tone of so many of the comments, we shall first present a cross section of them, and afterwards, a summary in tabular form.

Like the *Dead End Kids* we formed a club and do quite a few things we should not do. (1)*

Well, I like to try to walk like Mickey Rooney. (1)

About how those cowboys knock a guy out. I try their stuff sometimes but it doesn't work so good. (1)

Makes me feel I should be better.

That crime does not pay and that your mother is the best friend you got. (1)

Lead me to dislike my mother in some ways. (1)

Gave me a strong desire to take a girl out. (1)

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* Numbers identify the writer of the comment, e.g., (1) freshman; (2) sophomore, etc.

Love Finds Andy Hardy changed my mind a little and made me think about later life. (1)

Showed me how to handle girls, and how to act in public. (1)

Made me wild around the house, and some of them make me act tough. (1)

Drove me to certain acts of impurity. (1)

Sometimes I think of being a doctor or lawyer after seeing a surgical picture. (2)

I follow the principles of the actors. (2)

When younger I used to re-enact the Westerns, but now I copy the techniques of the stars. (2)

They have given me the idea that I should be having more dates. (2)

When I come from a mystery picture I wish I could be mysterious. (2)

Seeing "hot" scenes arouses my passions. (2)

Taught me how to act in company, how to eat, and how to improve my talk. (2)

How to make love to girls, the proper way to kiss, one arm over and one arm under. (2)

I try to imitate them in every way, talk like them, act like them, dress like them. (2)

They changed my opinions on sexual things, made me believe things my conscience does not approve. (2)

Afterward they come back to me and cause bad thoughts. (2)

Movies showing men and girls so close together sometimes breaks down my morals. (2)

I find myself doing what the leading actor would have done if he were in my place. (3)

If I see a man acting the part of a perfect gentleman, I want to be a perfect gentleman. (3)

Get me thinking I could "get away" with a crime if I only did it and planned it well. (3)

I usually act goofy after seeing a comedy and keep on repeating certain things. (3)

They have made me act better and have changed my character. (3)

Going out with girls after a love picture makes me want to kiss and fondle them. (3)

Made me dress neater and aroused my curiosity to the extent of looking up certain things. (3)

In matters of religion mostly — pertaining to girls and necking. (3)

When I see a movie in which a man is with a woman, I listen and watch closely all his manners and actions. (3)

Have changed my ideas all around. (4)

I often find myself planning my life according to what I have seen in the movies. (4)

Many of my actions are patterned after those I see on the screen. (4)

Sometimes they make me braver and give me more confidence. (4)

They have got me to feel that I am someone else: a brave hero. (4)

Gave me a desire to help better the conditions in the slums. (4)

Sometimes I walk straighter and am more courteous and polite. (4)

They have given me a "never-say-die" spirit. (4)

Got me finally to buy a speed boat. (4)

Have showed me how to solve some of my problems and have given me an ambition to be somebody. (4)

After seeing a love picture I replay the love scenes with my girl friend. (4)

Some movies have taught me certain tricks of making love and have shown me new ways of petting. Afterwards I try them out on the girl I'm with. (4)

TABLE 28. Influence of Movies on 952 High-School Boys

Rank	*Manner of Influence*	*Per cent*
1.	Movies have caused me to imitate the hero and other characters; inspired me to do what they did, to try to live as they live..	15.2
2.	Influenced my actions, my behavior and conduct; tried to be funny like the actors, tried to act tough like a ganster.....	14.6
3.	Changed my attitudes and gave me new viewpoints; affected my thinking on a number of things; set my imagination in motion	9.9
4.	Taught me new ideas; gave me a broader view of life and people; influenced me educationally	9.6
5.	Influenced my manners, my social relations; showed me how to act in public and in certain situations; made me more polite	9.2
6.	Influenced me in sex matters, morally; gave me impure ideas, drove me to impure actions	8.6
7.	Imitated their talk and mannerisms; made me try to talk more distinctly; imitated them in dress and appearance.....	8.4
8.	Gave me an ideal, a goal to aim at; stirred my ambitions vocationally. (10 per cent of these add: "But the ideal was false," or "Gave me impossible ambitions.")	8.2
9.	Good: gave me desire to improve myself; to do better, to do good; showed that crime does not pay	7.5
10.	Affected my relations with girls; showed me lovemaking techniques; gave me a desire for pretty girls and more dates..	7.4
11.	Gave me ambitions to do big things, to be a hero, to be rich and to lead an easy life; a desire for popularity	6.2
12.	Miscellaneous: cleared up some of my problems, aroused my curiosity about things, "just a bad influence," showed me how people get away with things	3.7

A glance at the above comments and Table 28 impresses us with the role of imitation in the adolescent's life. It is because of the adolescent's readiness to imitate that the movies exert such a powerful influence on him. In the table above we note how four out of ten mention specific instances of their imitating characters on the screen, while imitation is none the less present in the other ways in which they are influenced, though not specifically expressed. There is no doubt that the adolsecent tends to take the attractive screen heroes as his models. In a way, this is none other than what should be expected, for the majority of movies deal with the conduct of young men and women and therefore treat of that phase of life into which the high-school boy is entering. He is vitally interested in this new phase of his life which as yet is quite vague, and he is therefore anxious to learn about it. To him what is portrayed on the screen is modern, up to date, correct, and thus he looks to this supplementary system of education to learn how to deal with others, how to act in public, how to talk, and what to wear. Thus, after seeing a movie, many an adolescent may practice poses and mannerisms before the mirror, imitating the hero's nonchalance, his manner of smoking a cigarette, even his manner of implanting a kiss as he makes love to the heroine.

Many of the boys explained in general terms the influence which they feel movies have on them; hence it is difficult to determine exactly if their reactions are wholesome. However, judging from the above table, it seems that the influence of movies on these boys is on the unwholesome side.

Give Wrong Idea on Sex and Petting

An attempt was made to see specifically what effect movies had in the matter of sex and respect for authority. We asked the boys, *Have the movies ever given you wrong ideas about sex, love, and petting? Have the movies ever lessened your respect for authority?*

To the first of these questions, 43.7 per cent replied in the affirmative, though 55.8 per cent said the movies rarely had this influence upon them. Of those who have been given wrong ideas on sex and love by the movies, 30 per cent say that they have very frequently been influenced in this manner. A study of these replies on the various age levels reveals a tendency for the older boys to be more affected by the movies in this matter of sex than the younger boys. Some go as far as to add, "Something should be done to stop certain shows from showing suggestive movies." Yet, while more than four out of ten admit that the screen has had a detrimental influence on them in the matter of sex, love, and petting, it seems that there are still others who have been similarly influenced but who fail to recognize this influence as wrong. Some, in replying to related questions, say: "The movies have made me kiss and pet much more than I would otherwise"; "Through the movies I have come to freely abandon myself to the fact that lovemaking is okay." However, these same individuals fail to admit that motion pictures have given them wrong ideas in these matters.

Nearly eight out of ten (79.1 per cent) claim that the movies have not lessened their respect for authority. A few replying thus add that, on the contrary, movies have made them think more highly of law and authority. One out of five (19.7 per cent), though, has lost some respect for authority because of the flippant treatment of those in authority by the movies. But only one out of twenty (5.2 per cent) has frequently had this experience.

Among the one fifth who say their respect for authority has been lessened by the movies, the younger adolescents tend to predominate.

Engender Dissatisfaction With Life in Some

We sought further information about the effects of movies on adolescents with the following question, *After seeing a movie, do you come away as satisfied with your condition in life as before you went in?*

In portraying the life of modern youth in an attractive, romantic way, amid a setting of luxury and freedom, motion pictures tend to

engender a certain amount of dissatisfaction with life. Almost unconsciously, one is led to compare his own life with that presented on the screen, and such a comparison may lead one to become dissatisfied with his own condition in life. Blumer, in a sample of 458 motion-picture autobiographies of high-school students, found that 22 per cent of them mentioned that motion pictures had caused them to become dissatisfied with their home.[21] According to our study, six out of every ten high-school boys (60.3 per cent) are not affected in this manner at all; but one out of every ten very frequently is. For these 200 boys, almost every movie they go to see sends them away more dissatisfied with their condition in life than they were before they went in to see it. Outside of the few who did not answer (.5 per cent), an additional three out of ten (29.2 per cent) experience these same feelings of dissatisfaction but only occasionally. For these latter, only certain types of movies produce this mood of introversion which makes them feel dissatisfied. In general, the number of older boys who are affected by movies in this way tends to be larger than the number of younger boys.

Movies Sought as a Source of Guidance

One more point remains to be considered, namely, the extent to which high-school boys look to the movies for solutions to their perplexities and for light and guidance in their life. In moments of moral crisis it is quite possible that an adolescent may turn to the sayings or actions of a hero who found himself in an analagous situation, as a practical way out of a difficulty.

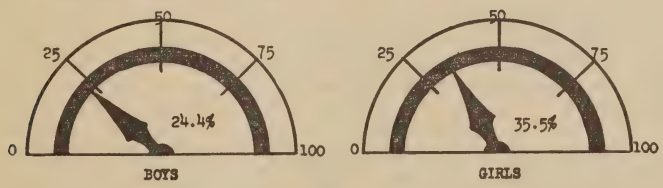

Figure 31. Percentage who feel the movies are an important guiding influence in their lives.

To see to what extent adolescents really look to the movies for guidance, we asked them, *Do you feel the movies are an important guiding influence in your life?* To this question 24.4 per cent of the boys answered "Yes"; 62.6 per cent, "No"; and 12.4 per cent, "Uncertain." Twelve boys gave no answer. From the answers that were given to the next question, *Why?* it is apparent that a fair number who answered "No" to the question we are considering interpreted the word *important* to mean *necessary* guiding influences, for they

[21] Herbert Blumer, *Movies and Conduct*, 156.

TABLE 29. Reasons Given by High-School Boys as to Why They Do or Do Not Regard the Movies as an Important Guiding Influence in Their Lives

A. Why 488 boys regard movies as an important guiding influence in their life:	
1. Learn about life from them, the ways of the world, how others live, and things I would not otherwise know about	24.8%
2. They teach us what to do and what not to do, what is expected of us, how to live and how to act in life, what is right and what is wrong; give pointers in love matters and social relations	21.2
3. Give me ideals, ambitions, inspiration; show models and examples I can follow	15.0
4. Give me new ideas, new attitudes, new viewpoints	8.8
5. Because movies are educational	8.4
6. Show me how to solve some of my problems	6.8
7. I naturally try to imitate what I see and therefore are important	6.0
8. Teach us that crime does not pay; show dissatisfactions and hardships of life	5.6
9. Because of the morals portrayed in them	3.0
10. Miscellaneous: Because of their alluring way of putting things, see so many of them; stay in your mind so long; help in deciding vocation; recreational influence	7.1
B. Why 608 boys do not regard movies as an important guiding influence in their life:	
1. Movies are too fictional and farfetched to be taken as a guide; not true to life	22.1%
2. Regard movies only as entertainment	20.1
3. Realize they are only stories; they are just for box-office returns	19.8
4. They teach things that are not good for you; glorify wrong things	9.4
5. Do not pay much attention to movies, do not take them seriously	7.8
6. Have no bearing on my life	6.3
7. Forget them when I leave the theater or soon after	5.7
8. Not an *important influence* because can get along without them	5.4
9. Don't see enough of them to affect me	4.5
10. Other reasons	3.2

went on to explain that they could "get along without it" or that they consulted others who influenced them more. But be that as it may, one fourth of our Catholic high-school boys do regard the movies as an important guiding influence in their lives.

It would seem, however, that our high-school girls look even more to the movies as a guiding influence than do our boys, for more than a third of the girls (35.5 per cent) felt their attendance at the movies was an important guiding factor in their life, only 52.8 per cent of them being of the opposite opinion.[22] (See Fig. 31.) These figures are quite significant in view of the fact that many of the motion pictures portray principles of conduct and concepts of character which are anything but wholesome and certainly not in keeping with the Catholic code of morals.

[22] Sister Mildred Knoebber, O.S.B., *The Self-Revelation of the Adolescent Girl*, 118.

Movies, a Guiding Influence: Pro and Con

Further light is cast upon the adolescent's reaction to the movies when we consider his reasons for regarding or for not regarding motion pictures as an important guiding influence in his life. In Table 29 we have summarized his reasons, both pro and con, in this regard.

In order that the reader may still further appreciate the boys' reasons for their views of the movies as an important guiding factor in their life, we present a random sampling of their comments which will lend individual color to the reasons already presented in tabular form above. Some give the following reasons for taking movies seriously:

Because they sometimes work out my troubles. (1)*
They give me ideals to live for. (1)
They show us things that do not occur in our lives and therefore help us to understand life. (1)
Help me make up my mind on what I want to be. (1)
A good movie is like a lesson in leading a good life. (1)
In the movies I see boys who are faced with the same problems as I am. (1)
Because they tell you what to do in life. (1)
Give me different slants on life. (2)
They make your own difficulties smaller. (2)
Give me pointers for my everyday life. (2)
Movies put you wise to a lot of tricks and give you good advice on a number of things. (2)
Teach you how to act and what is right. (2)
They show you real life and what you see in the pictures stays in your mind longer than anything else. (3)
Give me an example of how to live and point out the way for me. (3)
Men on the screen are men that are worth trying to follow. (3)
Sometimes they give you new ideas that help you in your life. (3)
Because I have got in the habit of looking to them for ideas. (3)
I try to model myself after the hero. (3)
Help me to understand things in my own life. (3)
Teach you fine points, show you what it takes to be a success. (4)
Many of the things they deal with parallel things in my life which I am anxious to know about. (4)
They give me a preview of the life that lies ahead of me. (4)
Because some movies teach you about love. (4)

Movies are not taken seriously by some boys for the following reasons:

Because they are not real life, they are fakes. (1)
They are make-believes and a lot of bunk. (1)
I know that movies aren't patterned after real life. (2)
Because some don't teach you the proper things, they make you want to go out and steal after seeing a show. (2)

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* Numbers identify the writer of the comment, e.g., (1) freshman; (2) sophomore, etc.

Movies always end up with mushy love and that can't happen in real life. (2)
They are too far removed from my life. (3)
Most of them are impossible in the lives of real people. (3)
Written to make money and therefore not authoritative to guide my life. (3)
I forget them three hours after I see them. (3)
They are just stories written only to please the public. (3)
Too imaginary for my practical mindedness. (4)
They cut no ice, I only go for the fun. (4)
Companions, parents, and teachers influence me more. (4)
Some are too shady and you naturally know they are no guides. (4)

Why, then, do high-school boys feel that movies are an important guiding influence in their life? Because they feel that movies teach them about life and the ways of the world; because they teach them what to do, how to act, what is right, and what is wrong. At least 46 per cent of those who look to the movies for guidance give this as their reason for so doing. The danger of this attitude is self-evident, and it throws much light on the multifarious problems to which this attitude may give rise. Others feel that the movies provide them with ideals and inspiration, give them new ideas, and show them how to solve their problems.

And why is it that the majority of high-school adolescents do not regard the movies as an important guiding factor in their life? Because they realize that movies are not true to life, that they are only stories, and because they regard them merely as entertainment. So reply 62 per cent who do not take their movies seriously. Therefore, according to their own way of thinking, the majority of our high-school boys regard the movies principally as a form of entertainment.

There are some men, principally in the commercial world, who would overdraw the latter view of the movies. They emphasize the fact that the movies are sheer entertainment, a catharsis, a purging of the emotions, an opportunity to escape from the headaches of living. But such a limited concept of the movies as a sort of national aspirin is not in keeping with the findings presented in the foregoing pages. With nearly five out of every ten boys claiming that the movies have influenced their conduct and with almost as many admitting that these pictures have given them wrong moral ideals, with four out of every ten stating that movies have at least on occasion made them dissatisfied with their own lot in life, with one out of five claiming a lessening of respect for authority because of what was seen on the screen, and with one out of every four feeling that the movies are an important guiding influence in life, it is quite evident that motion pictures are more than mere entertainment. They are a powerful educative force, capable of turning the rising tide of youth either into the path of wholesome manhood or backward into the sinful path of self-indulgence.

Chapter 15

PROBLEMS OF THE ADOLESCENT IN THE REALM OF SEX

The problem of keeping pure is ever new, for the temptations from without are ever changing, even though the temptations from within are ever the same. This problem for our modern adolescents is particularly trying because while the temptations from without have approached the violent stage, supports from within have been weakened. The virus of the new paganism is inoculating all classes to such an extent that what was once respected as virtuous is now decried as reactionary or opposed to progress. The very atmosphere in which our boys and girls live reeks with the poisonous thought germs which even tend to destroy the true concept of sin; they are told that unchastity or even promiscuity does not make any difference as long as one knows how to keep out of trouble. Not to be virtuous but to be clever is the thought emphasized by this anti-Christian hedonism, overstimulating the adolescent, inciting him to experiment on the danger front.

Living amidst a maelstrom of animalistic tendencies, surrounded by a tumult of discordant voices urging immorality, is it any wonder that our young people of today are overconscious of sex? If their minds are thus preoccupied, it is because sex has been assigned too much significance in life and one's personality as a whole. At almost every turn they are left with the impression that it is the central interest of life, the very hinge upon which life turns. Magazines on the corner newsstand leave them with the idea that unless sexual satisfactions are obtained life will be filled with unhappiness, and that love is no more than a matter of sex.

Purity a Principal Problem

Exposed to such exciting influences, adolescents find it quite difficult to make the transition from the passive purity of their early childhood to the positive, voluntarily chosen purity of adolescence. Many leaders closely associated with youth feel that the problem of purity is the principal problem of the adolescent boy. Bomholt, after twenty-five years of intimate contact with boys, finds that the boy problem is, at bottom, a sex problem, and urges Catholics to reconcile themselves to the truth of the fact.[1] Sister Helen De Sales Forrest, S.S.J.,

[1] "Sex Hygiene," *Fortnightly Review* (1929), 230.

in her study of the incidence of moral and emotional problems of youth, found that the top-ranking problem among high-school boys was sex, with more than two out of every three boys (67.5 per cent) reporting this difficulty as their major problem.[2] According to her findings, sex constituted more than a third (38 per cent) of all the problems of these high-school boys. And O. M. Butterfield in his study of 1196 adolescents reveals that sexual perplexities relative to the love problems of adolescents were predominant throughout his findings.[3]

It is the purpose of the present chapter to investigate the various phases of the Catholic high-school boy's difficulties in the realm of sex. As we examine our findings point by point, we shall learn of the extent to which inadequate knowledge of moral principles as to what is and what is not a sin in regard to purity proves a problem for our adolescents; the proportion of boys who obtain their initial information on sex from unwholesome sources and the effect which this information has on them; how they customarily regard sex, and what constitutes their attitude toward the morality of petting and necking; and, finally, what proportion of them actually worry over problems in this field.

There is superabundant evidence to bear out the truth of the fact that the boy devoid of a clear idea of what is natural and what is sinful encounters many a needless difficulty in trying to lead a pure life. Schumacher points out, for example, that many a boy is shocked, puzzled, and made miserable because of his failure to understand that nocturnal emissions are perfectly normal functions.[4] Instead of realizing that such emissions are a natural occurrence in every healthy boy, the boy feels that there is something wrong with him, that he is a "rotter"; he may even go so far as to believe such nonsense as his having "lost manhood." Such senseless worry not only creates the problem of an unsettled mind but actually renders thought control all the more difficult because such worry tends to keep things sexual uppermost in the adolescent's mind.

Boys Want Clearer Rules on Sex

Lack of clear rules as to what is sinful and what is not proves a disturbing problem for a boy. Sister Mary Antonina, S.D.P., produces evidence that Catholic adolescents want instruction on purity,[5] while Matthew O'Neill, O.Carm., offers indisputable proof that

[2] *The Actual Incidence of Moral and Emotional Problems of College Girls and High School Boys and Girls* (Washington, D. C.: Unpublished Master's Thesis, The Catholic University of America, 1937), 12.

[3] *Love Problems of Adolescence* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1939), *passim.*

[4] *Adolescence*, 11.

[5] *Religious Instruction in the Catholic High School* (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America, 1930).

not only do Catholic high-school boys want instruction in moral principles but that they are in dire need of it.[6] Rt. Rev. Lambert Burton, O.S.B., is in accord in reporting the findings of the Committee on the Teaching of Religion appointed by the National Benedictine Educational Association. He states that there is much complaint on the part of young people with regard to the treatment of what are called "the avoided subjects," and that more practical explanations of the moral law and of the Church's attitude toward "necking parties" are wanted, as well as more frank discussion on sexual ethics.[7]

Sister Mary Antonina submitted the following question to the third- and fourth-year boys of Catholic high schools: *Are there any topics that you would like to have included in your religion course that are not already there?*[8] They responded that they wanted "more stress on morals," "candid discussion of the problems of the youth of today," "vocation talk," "fuller explanation of the Sixth and Ninth Commandments." These were listed as the top-ranking subjects on which they wanted more specific explanation. More than 90 per cent of the boys (1357) admitted that they needed instruction on "how to meet temptations."[9] The following are indicative of the type of replies received from the boys: "Many times I did not know whether I committed a sin or whether I was just vulgar. I still do not know whether necking or kissing is a sin." "People say that 'Silence is golden'; silence is *criminal,* therefore we want more sex talks in plain words."

In investigating the incidence of the problem of uncertainty among the subjects of our study, regarding the sinfulness of certain acts in the field of purity, we put the following questions: *Are you perfectly clear as to what is and what is not a sin in regard to purity? Do you feel you need clearer rules on what is sinful regarding impure thoughts, words, actions? Do you feel there is sufficient explanation of sex and purity in your school? Do you have any doubts as to what is allowed and what is not allowed when out on a date with a girl?*

The answers to these questions are graphically summarized in Figure 32. We shall discuss the replies to these questions in order.

First of all, when the boys are asked whether they know what is a sin and what is not in regard to purity, seven out of ten (73.2 per cent) answer offhand, "Yes"; three out of ten, however, reply "No," or indicate that they are doubtful. But when they are confronted a little later with the question, *Do you feel you need clearer rules on what is sinful regarding impure thoughts, words, actions?* more than

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[6] *A Study of the Moral Principles Relative to the Sixth and Ninth Commandments of 900 High School Freshman Students* (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Notre Dame University, 1932).

[7] "Fourth Report of the Committee on the Teaching of Religion," *Bulletin of the National Benedictine Educational Association* (1929), 17–18.

[8] *Religious Instruction in the Catholic High School,* 46.

[9] *Ibid.,* 126–127.

four out of ten (42.7 per cent) reply that they do need clearer rules in this matter. Half of the boys (53.4 per cent) feel that the rules they have are clear enough while a few (4 per cent) are doubtful. Further, we note that the number of older boys who feel the need for clearer rules on purity tends to be larger than the number of

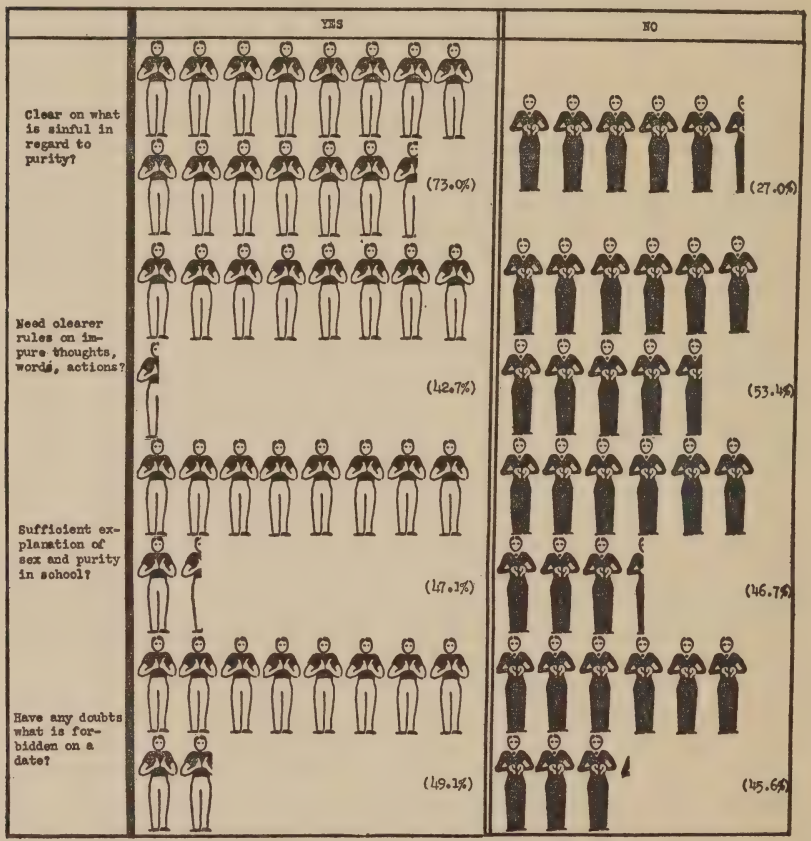

Figure 32. How adolescents feel about their knowledge concerning purity. Each figure represents the opinion of 5 per cent of the adolescents studied.

younger boys. At this point in the problemmaire some of the students asked about certain difficulties in this matter. Some asked strange questions; for example, one junior inquired: "Is the taking of saltpeter to refrain from impure desires and actions considered a sin?" Others merely ask: "What is the best way to keep your mind free from impure thoughts?"

When asked specifically if they know what is sinful regarding

impure thoughts, words, and actions, more of the boys seem to become aware of their uncertainty as to what is sinful and what is not.

Boys Doubtful About What Is Forbidden on a "Date"

Another detailed question which we put to the boys inquired into the extent to which they are doubtful as to what is allowed when out on a date with their girl friends. We asked this question in view of problems which we shall take up later regarding petting and necking. Again, when a specific phase of the problem of purity is mentioned, a larger number of boys give evidence of their uncertainty regarding what is permitted and what is forbidden. Half of the boys (49.1 per cent) say that they are not clear as to what conduct is forbidden when on a date. The number who answer thus come particularly from the upper years in high school. In fact, there is a regular increase from year to year in the number of boys who have doubts in this matter.

Of the other half of the boys, 45.6 per cent say that they do not have any doubts on this score, while 5.3 per cent are not sure whether their views on the question of conduct on a date are correct or not. Some write, "Is it a sin to neck, and if so, why? Some of these things should be written down clearly in a book." Others add, "More definite teaching about what a fellow and girl should not do on a date and especially on the way home is needed." Another writes, "Things like holding a girl tight in a dance should be explained more clearly — is it wrong, and if so, when?" A seventeen-year-old junior adds, "When I am out with a girl at night I don't know what is a sin or what is not. Please explain how far a boy is allowed to go, what is right and what he shouldn't do. What is a sin and what is not?" The writer of the last remark says that he obtained his first information on sex from the street, companions, magazines, books, and movies. He adds further that this information had a bad influence on him and that his biggest problem is a "bad habit."

The ideas of others are even still more warped; for example, a senior asks: "What is the proper age when a boy should start to have sexual intercourse? Lastly, is it sinful? Some say 'yes,' some say 'no,' what is right?" Such ignorance and false ideas spring from misinformation gathered at foul sources and left to spawn in the dark of a contaminated environment largely because of the neglect of parents and teachers who fail to give specific instruction in moral principles relative to purity.

Schools Do Not Give Sufficient Instruction in Purity

Do the boys feel that they are given sufficient explanation of sex and purity in school? Nearly half of them (46.7 per cent) do not think so while about the same number (47.1 per cent) are of the opposite opinion, and a few (5.8 per cent) are doubtful. Again we

have a large number of boys adding their comments, some in the form of a complaint, others in the form of a request for definite information. The following are typical:

> In most other schools there is instruction by priests on sex and it is given in the way it should be learned. Here, where we are taught by priests, there is no such instruction. I think it would be an aid if a law were made making schools teach something on this subject. I know that if I were instructed properly in the beginning I would have saved myself a lot of mental grief.
>
> I am not one who thinks sex problems should be known to everyone so that it would be as common as the ABC's, but I do believe that boys and girls should be told certain details so that they would not be so curious and so anxious for the thrill of sex experiences themselves.
>
> Why do elders dislike discussing sex problems and explaining them when they should know it is a help and not a hindrance in our lives?
>
> I feel that the school should give us a fuller explanation of sex and its intricacies so as to acquaint us better with what we'll have to face later on. I for one am *puzzled about many sexual problems.*

Others would like to have a booklet on sex which would give them the Catholic point of view. Evidently their teachers have neglected to call to their attention the dozen or more excellent booklets we now have on this subject.[10] Hence they write: "I think there should be a pamphlet written about sex so that boys could really understand it." "I would like to have a source where information on sex problems could be obtained for shy persons." "I think that a Catholic book on sex should be printed which would be clean and clear for boys of my age" (a sixteen-year-old senior). "I'd like a good practical book on sex by a Catholic priest or layman telling me what is right and what is wrong."

Some of the seniors look ahead to married life and ask certain questions on birth control, as, for example: "Is there any way in the eyes of the Church in which the growth of your family can be stopped without giving up the liberties of married life?" "Is it sinful to enjoy the privileges of married life with a view of having no more children, provided you have two or three?"

Glancing back over the replies to our various questions, we note that from the point of view of the boys themselves, uncertainty regarding the morality of certain thoughts, words, and actions relative to purity constitutes a series of problems for about one half of the adolescents in our Catholic high schools. One out of every four says he is not clear as to what is a sin in regard to purity, while nearly twice as many, when questioned on more specific points, say that

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[10] Felix M. Kirsch, O.F.M.Cap., *In Defense of Chastity* (Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor Press). Fulgence Meyer, O.F.M., *Safeguards of Chastity* (Cincinnati: St. Francis Book Shop). C. C. Martindale, S.J., *The Difficult Commandment* (New York: P. J. Kenedy and Sons). P. J. Bruckner, S.J., *Sex Instruction* (St. Louis: Queen's Work Press). Sylvester P. Juergens, S.M., *Fundamental Talks on Purity* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company).

they feel they need clearer rules. We repeat, these figures are based on what the boys themselves think about the matter.

However, do the other half of the boys actually have clear and correct moral principles? Matthew O'Neill, O.Carm., offers strong evidence to the contrary. He says: "Taking a class of 100 pupils, 90 of them will be found to possess moral principles which are based not on Catholic theology but upon morality of irreligious environment in which these boys live."[11] He found that, at entrance into high school, "less than five boys out of a hundred considered sexual excitement any sin. Most of them look upon fornication and masturbation as the only things to be considered."[12]

Adolescents Ignorant of Correct Moral Principles

O'Neill offers further evidence that the problems of our Catholic high-school boys in this matter are worse than the boys themselves evidently realize. After the 900 freshmen, who constituted the subjects of his study, were given special instruction in the correct principles of purity, they were asked if they had previously had the correct idea of a sinful thought. To this question, 98 per cent replied that they had not; 79 per cent claimed that they had been taught that all sins against purity were mortal, while an equal number added that they did not find this general principle practical. It is rather striking that 85 per cent claimed that at one time they did not look upon self-abuse as a mortal sin; likewise significant is the fact that previously 92 per cent did not regard shows which excited the passions a source of serious sin. Ninety-four per cent did not consider petting a mortal sin, yet after they were given clear moral principles, 98 per cent did consider it such. Almost every one of them, actually 98 per cent, said that previously they had had no way of distinguishing between a venial and a mortal sin against purity, while 96 per cent did not know that there were any definite moral principles laid down concerning these matters. More than 99 per cent (885 out of 900), however, mentioned that they had experienced doubts in these matters, but only 6 per cent had ever consulted their parents or confessor in order to clear up their difficulties.

When asked whether anyone in grade school had ever given them a clear, simple statement of the Sixth Commandment, 99 per cent of the boys said "No." O'Neill concludes: "From the data collected and treated above, one can readily see that a course of morality relative to the Sixth and Ninth Commandments should find its way into the program of religion instruction in every Catholic high school."[13]

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[11] *A Study of the Moral Principles Relative to the Sixth and Ninth Commandments of 900 High School Freshman Students,* 16. These 900 boys were graduates of some 30 parochial and 5 or 6 public grade schools.

[12] *Ibid.,* 18.

[13] *Ibid.,* 32–34.

These findings seem to offer sufficient reason to believe that the number of boys in our study (half of them), who claim uncertainty regarding the sinfulness of certain acts relative to purity, would be much larger if the boys themselves could have judged their present views in the light of *true* principles, rather than in the light of their own *subjective* principles.

The Necessity of Sex Education

With half of the boys in our Catholic high schools doubtful about the sinfulness of certain of their thoughts and actions regarding purity, with just as many conscious of their need for clearer moral principles, and with many more harboring false principles which they do not know are false, there remains no longer the question whether the boys should be instructed about the moral aspects of sex. However, a second question still confronts us, a question of equally vital importance, namely, "Who should instruct the boys in matters of sex?" Should sex instruction be provided by contaminated companions who know only half-truths and entertain a flippant attitude toward sex? Or should sex instruction be provided by parents and teachers who, in telling the truth about sex, could instill a reverence for the subject in the adolescent's mind?

The late Cardinal Verdier declared the imparting of the necessary sex instruction to be "a grave obligation of charity and even of justice," and that the child "has the right to proper instruction in the 'facts of life' and in the means of overcoming temptation; and since every right postulates a corresponding duty, we must maintain that someone of his environment must impart this information."[14] Yet, our findings offer ample proof that parents, priests, and teachers have been neglecting, at least to a considerable extent, this obligation.

Joseph Schroeteler, S.J., stresses the fact that "under present-day conditions it will no longer do in our dealing with the young to be silent on this important subject. The subject can no longer be ignored. The young people must realize that we know of their struggle, and that we are ready and able to assist them in the fight."[15] The Rev. Dr. Felix M. Kirsch emphasizes that "in no case may we allow youth 'to stumble upon the significance of sex,'" He points out that "it is largely due to the policy of leaving the young to themselves in this field that there have been so many wrong notions current among them, sometimes for several years of their life." He goes on to say that "while it is true that a general education is of basic importance, it does not supersede the need for sexual instruction," for "if the knowledge is not furnished from pure sources, it will come to the youth in

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[14] Felix M. Kirsch, O.F.M.Cap., *Sex Education and Training in Chastity,* quoted in Introduction, xxiii.

[15] "Die Revolution der modernen Jugend," *Stimmen der Zeit* (October, 1928), 16.

a vile way, and will certainly prove a problem of the strongest character."[16]

Perhaps the best digest of reasons offered for the need of sex instruction is that presented by Vermeersch. While it would take us too far afield to present all the reasons he advances, we would like to mention a few points which he stresses. He says that if parents do not satisfy the curiosity of the young by giving them the information they desire, the latter will be impelled to obtain enlightenment elsewhere, not infrequently from corrupt sources; that the young cannot long remain ignorant in sex matters when we consider what is exposed to the public gaze in streets and stores and what is written in books and periodicals; that sex knowledge properly imparted will render the very sense of shame more conscious, more intelligent, and more meritorious; that not a few youths by mere chance experience sensual pleasure, and, indulging therein, contract the habit; that others are frightened by nocturnal emissions, grow depressed, and suffer the ill effects throughout life.[17] Finally, after reviewing Catholic discussion and experience on the subject of sex, he concludes: "It can be unhesitatingly affirmed that there is need of sex instruction. The only serious question is: What is the best time and manner of giving it."[18]

Not only educators and theologians, but pastors, too, are in general agreement on the necessity of sex instruction. Over 500 pastors in different sections of the country were asked: *In view of present-day dangers to chastity, do you think it necessary that our youth be instructed in sex matters?* Of the 368 who replied to this question, 349 answered "Yes."[19]

Silence Stimulates Curiosity

Competent authorities, such as those quoted above, agree that sex instruction is needed. However, some parents and educators continue to oppose sex instruction on the grounds that it may arouse undue curiosity and foster morbid interests. But it is secret rather than open discussion which creates morbidity. As Margaret Culkin Banning pointed out, "Young people are increasingly frank among themselves, and adult silence only serves further to separate generations which are already quite far enough apart in matters of advice and sympathy."[20] Not only is the bond of confidence between parents and son shaken, but the boy is left with the impression that he has to fight his battles alone, that if he wants information on sex, he must obtain it by himself. If the boy's questions are rebuffed, or if his parents appear shocked when he broaches the problem of sex, he gets the

[16] *Sex Education and Training in Chastity*, 82–83.
[17] Arthur Vermeersch, S.J., *De castitate* (Rome, 1919), 189–191.
[18] *Ibid.*, 198.
[19] Felix M. Kirsch, O.F.M.Cap., *op. cit.*, 97.
[20] "The Case for Chastity," *Reader's Digest*, 31 (1937), 2.

idea that the subject is taboo, that something must be wrong with his asking about it. As a result, his curiosity is aroused and an unhealthy state of mind regarding sex matters is produced. If there is something wrong about it, he makes up his mind he is going to find out, and he does. But the husks of half-truths which he picks up in the street do not satisfy him; their unsavoriness merely prompts further curiosity. Driven on to complete his information, he becomes confirmed in the idea that sex knowledge is esoteric and is to be regarded as stolen sweets. He investigates dictionaries, encyclopedias, and health books, and examines statues, playmates, and pictures. Thus, he develops the most vile and degrading thoughts about this most vital and sacred subject. In this manner, he comes into the possession of ideas which will prove to be throughout life a source of great temptations against purity. We must not forget that every idea and every emotion which penetrates the field of consciousness inclines to the corresponding act; hence the necessity of guarding the sources of our ideas and emotions.

Parents who fail to satisfy their children's natural curiosity and who conceal from them the facts of life should remember that it is a shrewd game of the devil to deceive parents by prompting a false modesty and suggesting silence instead of instruction. In matters of sex, instead of suppressing curiosity, silence merely veils the subject with fascinating mystery — always a strong incentive to sin and one which Satan so cleverly makes use of in this field — and thereby prods the youthful seekers on and on till their innocence is soiled and the very subject of sex itself becomes almost impossible of disassociation from the slime of the serpent.

Parents and even teachers must come to realize that they can safely, easily, and effectively remove the fuses from the bombs of misinformation by simply telling their children the true facts about sex and its high purpose in God's plan of peopling heaven.

What Should Be Told and When

It is understood, of course, that the sex information which we are talking about excludes detailed physiological information, for we must keep in mind the warning of the Pope's *Encyclical on the Christian Education of Youth,* "not to descend to details, nor to refer to the various ways in which this infernal hydra destroys with its poison so large a portion of the world."[21] As Allers points out, the child's questions are not so much sexual as ontological; the child wants to know where beings come from.[22]

In giving this information, there are certain general rules to be

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[21] N.C.W.C. edition, 26.

[22] *Sex Psychology in Education,* translated by Sidney A. Raemers (St. Louis: B. Herder Co., 1937), 206.

observed. Kirsch suggests that such information should be given as it is needed in the child's personal life.[23] Just enough should be given at each stage of his development to allay his curiosity, but not enough to stimulate further curiosity. There is no hard and fast rule stating at what age this information should be given, but, in general, we may take it as a principle that "the choice of time for sex instruction must be guided in part by the questions of the child, in part by the child's physical maturity, but more especially by the indications of psychosexual development."[24] Some Catholic writers in this field emphasize that this information on sex should be given before puberty, at which time the reception of such information will not cause an emotional disturbance.[25] This early enlightenment likewise makes certain that the information will not come from the wrong source, and secondly assures the child of not being helpless when the physical and psychical changes of adolescence come into his life. However, we must never lose sight of the more general principle that it is best for the child if the development of his sex life is held off as long as possible. We agree with G. Stanley Hall that inflicting sex information prematurely on a child is a "kind of psychic rape," yet, we must not be blinded to the lifelong harmful effects of contaminated information in this matter. For this reason, Catholic writers on the subject emphasize the rule: "Rather a year too soon than one hour too late."

It might be well at this point to mention that in answering the child's questions, teachers and parents should call everything by its proper name, never allowing an opportunity for the imagination to play on vague allusions which may mislead the boy. In this manner sex will be stripped of much unsavory mystery. By revealing frankly and simply the facts of sex as part of general education as curiosity arises and as the child grows up, and by impressing him with the holiness of the function, the sacrifices of maternity, and the necessity of a healthy body as a preparation for adult life, the whole subject of sex will be morally idealized in such a way as to free the boy's mind from brooding, or unenlightened, morbid thoughts, and passion-feeding conversation.

Allers believes that children should be introduced to the essential sex differences long before puberty if they are to be saved from an unwholesome curiosity in this matter,[26] while Kirsch says that "many priests believe that we shall spare the young folk the numerous temptations that may result from the prurient investigation of this fact later on, at the frequent stirrings of passion, by permitting boys and girls under five years of age to bathe together in the mother's

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[23] *Sex Education and Training in Chastity,* 133–134.

[24] *Ibid.,* 125.

[25] Paul H. Furfey, *You and Your Children* (New York: Benziger Bros., 1929), 112–113. Also Felix M. Kirsch, O.F.M.Cap., *op. cit.,* 133.

[26] *Sex Psychology in Education,* 213.

presence. Thus little boys and girls can learn the differences of anatomy before such mutual inspection in any way proves a temptation."[27]

That parents who are frank and sincere in this matter will be rewarded by an increase of confidence, love, reverence, and esteem on the part of their children is proved by the findings of our own study. In this connection Alban Stolz relates that he found in his travels in Spain a deeper reverence for motherhood than he had anywhere else.[28] He decided that this attitude was due to the fact that there was no prudery in dealing with the facts of life. The Spanish mothers inducted their children in a natural way into the knowledge of sex.

Sources of the Boy's Information on Sex

In order to ascertain the extent to which parents of adolescents discharge their duty of giving sex instruction, we asked the boys to indicate the sources from which they obtained their *first information on sex,* and then requested them to name the sources from which they had obtained *subsequent* information on this subject. Their replies to both of these questions are summarized in Table 30.

TABLE 30. Sources From Which 2000 Boys Obtained Their Information on Sex

Source of First Information				*Source of Later Information*		
Rank	*No. of boys*	*Per cent*	*Source*	*Rank*	*No. of boys*	*Per cent*
1	1098	54.9	Companions	1	995	49.8
2	692	34.6	The street	5	455	22.8
3	668	33.4	Books	2	777	38.9
4	497	24.9	Magazines	3	646	32.3
5	365	18.2	Priests	4	525	26.3
6	348	17.4	Father	9	346	17.3
7	308	15.4	Mother	10	313	15.7
8	398	14.9	Teachers	6	443	22.2
9	295	14.8	Movies	8	347	17.4
10	289	14.5	Newspapers	7	376	18.8
11	195	9.8	Older people	11	294	14.7
12	154	5.0	My brothers	12	149	7.5
13	101	5.0	Relatives	13	137	6.8
14	67	3.4	Doctor	14	129	6.5
15	40	2.0	My sisters	15	45	2.3
			Girl friends	16	24	1.7

From this table we note that fathers and mothers rank only fifth and sixth, respectively, among the sources from which these boys obtained their first information on sex. Only one out of every six boys was introduced to the facts of sex by his father, while even

[27] *Op. cit.,* xxxiv.

[28] *Die Christliche Frau* (January, 1904), 133; quoted by Felix M. Kirsch, O.M.Cap., *op. cit.,* 114.

fewer were introduced to the same by their mother. Only 6.7 per cent had the benefit of both parents introducing them to this subject. When we combine those who mention their father as a source of at least part of their initial knowledge of sex with those who mention their mother as a source, we have one fourth of the boys (26.1 per cent) who obtained at least part of their first information on sex from their parents. We may say, then, that the parents of three out of every four boys in our Catholic high schools neglect their duty of instructing their children on the subject of sex. With parents thus neglecting their duty, need we be surprised that nearly three out of five boys (54.9 per cent) obtained their first introduction to sex from their companions, or that more than a third of them (34.6 per cent) picked up their first ideas on this subject in the street, or that almost as many (33.4 per cent) thumbed through questionable books in an effort to satisfy their curiosity?

Almost as many (24.9 per cent) obtained their first knowledge of sex from suggestive magazines as from both parents combined (26.1 per cent), while fewer than one fifth (18.2 per cent) say they have been introduced to the subject by a priest. Says one senior: "I got my first information from the street, books, companions, movies, and magazines; and I would rather have never known than get it from these sources." He expresses the reaction of the majority who obtained their introduction to sex in a similar manner.

Unwholesome Sources Outweigh Wholesome Three to One

When we compare the number of boys who obtained their first information on sex from wholesome sources — parents, priest, teachers, or doctor — with the number of those who obtained their first information from unwholesome sources — companions, the street, books, magazines, movies, and newspapers — we find the latter outnumbering the former nearly three to one. Of the total number of first sources of sex information mentioned (5415 or 2.7 sources per boy), only one fourth (25.5 per cent) can be classed as wholesome, while two thirds (65.4 per cent) fit into the category of unwholesome or corrupt. Perhaps the percentage of boys who obtained their initial information on sex from tainted sources is actually higher than we have computed it, for while we included the doctor among the wholesome sources, not all found information from him helpful. Then, too, we omitted placing such sources of initial sex information as older people, relatives, brothers, and sisters, and girl friends in either category, for there is a possibility of their proving to be wholesome sources in some instances. There is evidence, however, that in any number of cases the contrary is true, as, for example, when these older people are maids or hired men.

It is interesting to compare our findings with other studies in this field. According to Exner, 91.5 per cent of his informants (948 college

men) had received their early impressions relative to sex from unwholesome sources, only 4 per cent had been instructed by their parents, while 80.4 per cent had been enlightened by their companions.[29] Seventy-eight per cent of the 1029 boys that Hughes studied reported that they received their first information on sex from other boys.[30] More recently, a woman magistrate, in reporting on the situation of sex instruction in New York, states that "99 per cent of New York parents are delinquent in that they do not tell their young children the simple truth about sex."[31] Judging from these figures, it would appear that, though the parents of our Catholic boys are negligent in the matter of imparting early sex instruction, they are less negligent of this duty than average parents. The findings of the Maryland Study confirm this observation, for 23 per cent of the Catholic youth in this study mention their parents as the source of most of their information on sex.[32] This is in agreement with our findings showing that one fourth mentioned their parents as a source of their information.

In examining our table on the sources of sex information for trends in sources of later enlightenment on sex, we note a tendency for the boys to seek this information from more varied sources. More specifically, among the unwholesome sources, books, magazines, movies, and newspapers rise in prominence as sources of sex information, while the street is mentioned less frequently than it was as a source of early enlightenment. Among the wholesome sources, priest and teachers are consulted more frequently than formerly, while the number of boys who have obtained their later information on sex from their parents is about the same as the number of those who were initiated into this subject by them, though they are consulted on this matter with less frequency relatively, as is evident from their passing from sixth to ninth place among sources from which information is sought.

Why Parents Neglect Their Duty

One may ask why it is that so many parents (three fourths of them) fail to give their children this sex information to which they have a right. Is it that parents fail to realize the host of problems that they are causing their sons by allowing them to get their information from polluted sources? Perhaps this is one of the reasons, but the main reason seems to be that the parents simply do not know how to broach the subject. They feel unfit to give this information because

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[29] M. J. Exner, "The Sex Factor in Character Training," *Journal of Social Hygiene,* 10 (1924), 5–6.

[30] Walter L. Hughes, "Sex Experiences of Boyhood," *Journal of Social Hygiene,* 12 (1926), 262–273.

[31] E. B. Buck, "The Necessity of Sex Education," *The American Mercury,* 47 (1939), 30–36.

[32] Howard M. Bell, *Youth Tell Their Story,* 40.

no one has ever taught them how to tell the facts; through the years they have been straightening out their own twisted attitudes on the subject gathered at a similar back-fence source of information. They not only lack the information but the vocabulary as well. As Kirsch puts it, "98 per cent of them never received the proper information themselves and hence cannot impart it; and secondly, the terminology with which they are familiar is either vulgar or even obscene, and they naturally feel embarrassed about using such language in the presence of their children."[33] The best way of making certain that our present adolescents will not find themselves in a similar plight when they become parents would seem to be to instruct them now both as to the facts and the proper vocabularly.

There are other reasons, too. Some children themselves are hesitant because of a sense of shame. Others, by their "wisecracking," give their parents the impression that they know all the answers, but these are the exception. Then there are some parents who are likely to feel, when talking on this subject of sex, that they are discussing their own experiences and that their children will regard their explanations as such. This is one of the reasons why it is sometimes easier for someone outside the family to speak to the children about these matters. Still other parents are afraid of giving scandal, or they allege that the child is not old enough.

Age When Boys First Learn About Sex

To answer this last objection, let us examine the age at which children become interested in sex. We consider this question important because of the bearing this early information has on the later problems of the boy. Walter L. Hughes, in a study of more than 1000 boys, found that the average boy became "conscious of sex," to the extent that sex became an item of his thought life and a matter of conversation, at the age of twelve and one half years.[34] He says, "The seventh grade is commonly the period of first exchange of street information — the period in which boys, previously pure and clean minded, begin using all the dirty words they can pick up and telling stories of a coarse and obscene nature."

Exner's survey shows that the average American boy gets his first striking and permanent impressions of sex between the ages of nine and ten.[35] In a later publication Exner points out that 63.9 per cent of the 948 subjects which he studied had received their first permanent impressions before the eleventh year, and that 87.6 per cent had received them before the thirteenth year, with nine and one half years as the average age at which these first impressions were re-

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[33] *Sex Education and Training in Chastity,* 148.

[34] "Sex Experiences of Boyhood," *Journal of Social Hygiene,* 12 (1926), 262–273.

[35] *Problems and Principles of Sex Education* (New York: Association Press, 1922), 5.

ceived. The average age at which these young men received instruction about sex from wholesome sources was 15.6 years.[36] In other words, wholesome instruction on sex came just 6 years too late, after corrupt influences had 6 years in which to shape habits, ideas, and attitudes. This point is worth considering, for it explains why so many adolescents experience such trying problems in the matters of purity. O'Neill offers evidence that this situation is little different among Catholic boys.[37] Of 1074 freshmen, 68 per cent claimed enlightenment on sex in the seventh grade, 22 per cent in the sixth grade or lower, and 10 per cent in the eighth grade. It is a point of interest for high-school teachers that by the time these boys reached high school all were enlightened in the general matter of sex. Not a single boy was found without an idea of the origin of life or of what was meant by masturbation. Only 8 boys (.7 per cent) were found without an idea of fornication, and even here it may have been the word itself that puzzled them. We recall here that on an average 90 per cent of these boys had obtained their information from indecent sources.

These figures indicate that on the secondary level sex education is not so much a matter of presenting the facts of sex as of giving our young people the proper view on the subject and of providing them with the correct principles that will aid them in living a pure and wholesome life. Our findings above, however, show that when it comes to giving this instruction, "passing the buck" is the common practice: parents think it is up to the teacher, the teacher thinks it is up to the priest, the priest thinks it is up to the parent — a vicious circle. And as a result the boy is left to his own resources; so he goes out to the street and gets his information from the back fence.

How Remedy the Situation?

How can this major cause of the boy's problems be remedied? If, as we have seen above, parents largely neglect their duty, who should assume the responsibility of imparting the correct information on sex? Kirsch says, "In case the parents refuse to fulfill their obligation in the matter the duty devolves upon priests and teachers to instruct the children individually, according to the measure of their needs and our resources."[38] In his encyclical, *On the Christian Education of Youth,* Pope Pius XI says that the necessary instruction is to be given by "those who hold from God the commission to teach and who have the grace of state."[39] Kirsch points out that this means priests, parents, and teachers.

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[36] "The Sex Factor in Character Training," *Journal of Social Hygiene,* 10 (1924), 5–6.

[37] *A Study of the Moral Principles Relative to the Sixth and Ninth Commandments of 900 High School Freshman Students,* 6–7.

[38] *Op. cit.,* 163.

[39] N.C.W.C. edition, 26.

The difficulty here is that most teachers excuse themselves of any obligation in this regard, feeling that the duty rests with the priest in confession. Theoretically, the confessional is best suited for instruction, but practically, as Matthew Michel, O.S.B., states,[40] it is inefficacious because: (1) there is usually a congestion on the outside and in an effort to please all, instruction which should be given is passed over; (2) those who most need help often purposely pick a time when they know the confessional will be congested so they will not be detained by instruction; (3) the confessor cannot obtain all the information that might be obtained in a different situation, for moralists prudently hold the confessor to a certain reserve, even at the sacrifice of completeness of the confession (Code of Canon Law 880, 2); (4) a young person resents being detained in the confessional and his attention is drawn away from the admonition of the priest just because he is restlessly worried over the attitude of those who are waiting. Michel concludes: "We have considered the home, but found it wanting as a place and means of sex instruction, because neglect on the part of the parents. The confessional, too, has been ruled out, and the school remains as the only agency"[41] to impart this instruction. Kirsch brings out another point when he says, "It is no longer thought to be the part of discretion to leave all admonition in these matters to the confessor, who as a rule can only intervene after harm has been done."[42] Teachers, therefore, have a definite obligation to instruct students in the matter of purity. It is they who offer a practical solution to the problem of lifting from the lives of many of our adolescents the ball and chain of ignorance and misinformation which is the cause of so many of their most disturbing problems.

It is understood, of course, that sex instruction has no place in the school as a separate subject. Sex is part of the total personality and hence it must be treated as an integrated element in general education. Without character education, sex instruction would be like chaff before the wind. Ever mindful that knowledge is not synonymous with will power, the teacher must lay much stress on the education of the adolescent's will, for it would be practically impossible for the boy to understand the sacrifice that is called for in the teaching of the principles of purity unless schooled in the spirit of self-control.

At this point we can scarcely pass over the question of whether the teacher should give this instruction individually or collectively. M. S. Gillet, Master-General of the Dominicans, believes that a collective presentation is permissible "if one intends a moral teaching, the

[40] Matthew Michel, O.S.B., *Sex Instruction in the Catholic High School* (Washington, D. C.: Unpublished Master's Thesis, The Catholic University of America, 1929), 16–22.

[41] *Ibid.*, 23.

[42] *Sex Education and Training in Chastity*, 116.

character of which precisely envelops and sweetens the technical crudity."[43] He adds that "collectively as well as individually there are ways of speaking clearly of chastity and of the conditions of its loss or gain, without giving to the teaching the allurement of a course in medicine or a treatise on gynecology."

In general, the rule is that detailed instruction should be given privately, while instruction in moral principles may be given to the group. A priest who is an authority in this field stresses the fact that on the high-school level to be forewarned is to be forearmed; hence, "in treating the difficult Commandment teachers should always be specific in their instructions."[44] He goes on to say that "much of the catechism instruction on the Sixth Commandment is probably useless because of its being so vague and indefinite." He would have teachers explain clearly the concrete situations that our adolescents will have to face, so that they will recall at the moment of temptation the warning which was given them. He points out that by telling the young men in high school, even in detail of the temptations with which they will meet, teachers will be giving to them the necessary vigilance that Pope Pius XI speaks of in his encyclical, *On the Christian Education of Youth,* as being necessary in our day: "today more than ever they should be forewarned and forearmed as Christians against the seductions and errors of the world."[45] Yet teachers must not stop with forewarning; they must present chastity above all from the positive side, as something dynamically appealing, or, as Chesterton put it, "as something flaming, like Joan of Arc."

If we considered the matter of instruction in purity somewhat at length, it is because of the close bearing it has on the problems of the adolescent and because its neglect lies at the root of many of the boy's difficulties which we are to consider later in this chapter. Any step on the part of the proper authorities in the direction of imparting this information is a step toward alleviating many of the boy's problems.

Effect of Sex Information on the Boy

We now turn to consider the effects of the first sources of sex information on boys. In Table 31 we have attempted to classify the sources from which the boy obtained his first information as either dominantly wholesome or unwholesome. In doing so, we first had to judge each source as wholesome or unwholesome. Naturally, all sources could not be classified as such for some are indeterminate, as, for example, "older people," "brothers and sisters," and "girl friends,"

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[43] M. S. Gillet, O.P., *Innocence and Ignorance,* Translated by J. Elliot Ross, C.S.P. (New York: The Devin-Adair Co., 1917), 65.

[44] Felix M. Kirsch, O.F.M.Cap., "Teaching the Sixth Commandment," *Journal of Religious Instruction,* 7 (1937), 698–710.

[45] N.C.W.C. edition, 35.

TABLE 31. Effect of First Source of Sex Information on 2000 Boys

Source of Information (*Classified according to whether more wholesome or unwholesome sources were mentioned.*)	*No. of boys in each classification*	*Effect of Information*														
		Good			*Bad*			*Both good and bad*			*Neither, indifferent*			*Uncertain*		*No answer*	
		No. of boys	*Per cent*	*Per cent of each classification*	*No. of boys*	*Per cent*	*Per cent of each classification*	*No. of boys*	*Per cent*	*Per cent of each classification*	*No. of boys*	*Per cent*	*Per cent of each classification*	*No. of boys*	*Per cent*	*No. of boys*	*Per cent*
Unwholesome predominant (companions, street, books, magazines, movies, newspapers)	*1235*	† 253	† 12.6	† *20.5*	664	32.2	*53.3*	138	6.9	*11.2*	103	5.1	*8.3*	60	3.0	17	.8
Wholesome predominant (parents, priest, teachers)	*459*	367	18.4	‡ *80.0*	23	1.1	*5.0*	41	2.1	*8.6*	17	.9	*3.7*	9	.4	2	.1
Wholesome and unwholesome balanced	*225*	104	5.2	*46.2*	41	2.1	*18.2*	56	2.8	*24.9*	16	.8	*7.1*	6	.3	2	.1
Indeterminate predominant (older people, relatives, brothers and sisters, girl friends)	*81*	60	3.0	*74.1*	15	.8	*18.5*	0	.0	*.0*	5	.2	*6.2*	0	.0	1	.1
Totals	2000	784	39.2		743	37.2		235	11.8		141	7.0		75	3.7	22	1.1

†) Read: Of the 1235 whose sources of information were judged dominantly unwholesome, 253 or 12.6 per cent out of 2000 feel that this information had a good effect upon them. These represent 20.5 per cent of all those (1235) whose source of information was classified as predominantly unwholesome.

‡) This means that 8 out of 10 (80 per cent) of all those (459) whose source of information was classified as predominantly wholesome feel that this information had a good effect upon them.

any of whom might prove wholesome or unwholesome. In classifying the sources, we formed our judgment according to what one would objectively regard as a wholesome or unwholesome source from which to obtain sex information; hence, "parents," "priest," and "teachers" were counted as wholesome sources, while "companions," "the street," "books," "magazines," "movies," and "newspapers" were counted as unwholesome. But the majority of boys obtained their first information from mixed sources: some of it from wholesome, some of it from unwholesome sources. We decided to classify the boy's source of information as predominantly wholesome or unwholesome, depending on whether he mentioned more wholesome sources or more unwholesome sources. This was the only practical way in which we could correlate the source of information with the respective effect, though we admit the fallibility of this classification. Thus, although a boy may mention his mother together with companions, movies, and magazines as the sources of his initial information, his mother may have had a much greater influence on him than the other three combined, rendering the source of his first information in reality predominantly wholesome. Yet, because of our method of classification, his source of initial information would be classified as predominantly unwholesome. It will be well to keep this fact in mind in interpreting our data.

Using this method of classification, we find that the number of boys who received their first information on sex from predominantly unwholesome sources is nearly three times greater than the number of boys who received their information from wholesome sources.

What effect do the boys feel that sex information had on them? First of all, regardless of classification of source, we find that nearly four out of ten (39.2 per cent) feel that their initial information on this matter had a good effect on them, while practically the same number (37.2 per cent) feel that this information had a bad effect on them. About one out of ten (11.8 per cent) says that the information had both a good and a bad effect. In describing this effect, some boys declare: "Both good and bad, depending on the source"; "Good, except that from the street which had a bad effect upon me"; "From companions, a bad effect; from teachers, a good effect"; "My pals, bad effect; mother, good effect; magazines, not so good."

A small number (7 per cent) maintain that their first information did not affect them either way. Some of these explain: "Because I didn't pay much attention to it at the time." Again, there are a few (3.7 per cent) who are uncertain of how they were affected and a still smaller number failed to respond.

Effect and Source of Information Compared

Much more light is thrown on this question of initial information and its effect when we study our data from the point of view of the kind of source from which this information was obtained. Analyzing

Table 31, we note that if the source of the boy's early information on sex was predominantly wholesome, i.e., if all or the major part of it was obtained from either parents, priest, or teachers, then, even though he may have supplemented this information from unwholesome sources, the chances of the effect of being good over bad are 16 to 1. On the other hand, if the source of his initial information was predominantly unwholesome (i.e., more unwholesome sources were mentioned than wholesome), the chances of the effect being bad over good are almost 3 to 1. These figures offer a strong reason why parents, priests, and teachers should rouse themselves to the performance of their duty of imparting this necessary information to the children before they obtain it from tainted sources.

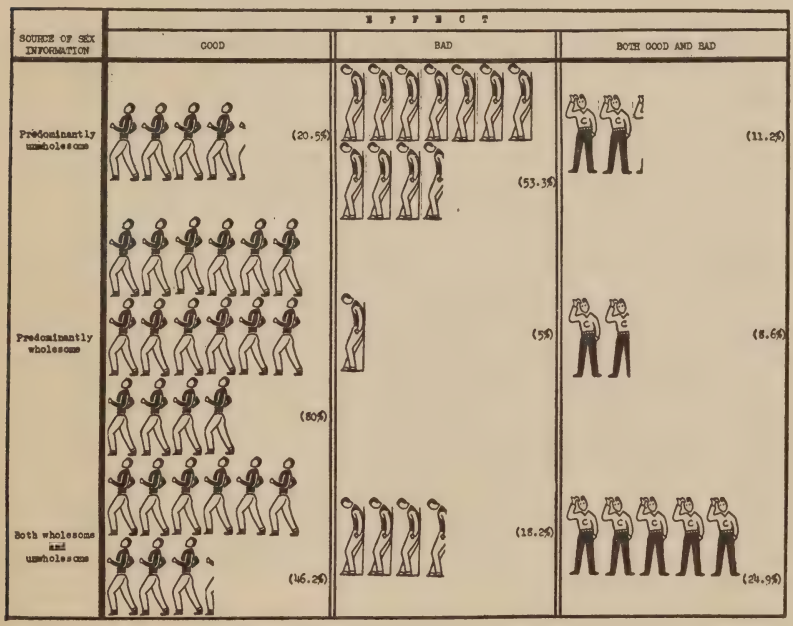

Figure 33. Comparison of source of sex information with the effect boys feel it had on them. Each figure represents 5 per cent of those whose source of information was as given.

In glancing over our table one may ask why it is that one fifth (20.5 per cent) of those whose source of early enlightenment on sex is classified as predominantly unwholesome assert that this information had a good effect upon them? If their source of information was predominantly unwholesome, one would expect that the effect would likewise be unwholesome.

What appears here to be a contradiction in our findings is actually

another point in support of the general trend of our data which point to the good results that issue from information obtained from wholesome sources. In the present case the wholesome sources which are mixed in with the more frequently mentioned unwholesome sources outweigh in their effect the unwholesome, and thus we can account for the majority of those who say the sex information had a good effect upon them, although an objective appraisal of the sources of their information would lead one to classify it as predominantly unwholesome. However, there are instances in the boy's replies where a companion or a book was the sole source mentioned, and yet the effect of the sex information obtained is said to have been good. Such is the case of the boy who replied, "Good effect, because the boy who told me is a good clean boy and was sincere about it," and of another who said, "My mother gave me a book which explained it and it cleared up my mind." These are illustrative of the exceptions. The more usual reactions when companions have been the source of initial sex information is reflected in the following replies: "Bad, gave me a desire to do things I should not have done"; "Bad effect and I still experience the results"; "Bad effect because it gave me the wrong impression of sex"; "Led me to abuse myself"; "Bad till I learned from more reliable source."

Another point in our data which we wish to single out for attention is the good effect which teachers, who account for about one fourth of all the wholesome sources mentioned, have in imparting this information on sex. Of those boys who received the major part of their early enlightenment from parents, priests, or teachers, the number who declare the general effect upon them to have been bad is only one out of twenty, even though practically every boy likewise obtained some of his information from tainted sources. This overwhelming preponderance of good influence, despite the fact that teachers are often said to have poor preparation for giving this instruction, is indeed encouraging and indicative of how much more good could be accomplished if more teachers were aware of their obligation in this matter.

Manner in Which Boys Were Affected

While we noted the extent to which first information on sex produces a good or bad effect, it is none the less significant to consider the form which this effect takes. According to the responses of the boys, it is safe to say that, in general, the bad effect takes the form of an unwholesome attitude toward sex, a wrong impression of it, or a bad habit. The good effect is usually in the form of a clearing up of the mind and a relieving of tension, a quieting of curiosity, and in the adoption of a sublimated and reverential attitude toward the subject. The following cross section of the replies reflects more fully the manner in which the boys have been influenced by their first

enlightenment on sex. In the parentheses following each comment we have indicated the source of the boy's information.

Bad — made me want to learn more. (Magazines, companions, newspapers)

It was good and made me less eager to find out things and listen to stories. (Mother)

Good effect, made me understand sex and things connected with it a lot better and relieved my mind. (Father and vague ideas from the street)

Bad because I learned too much that's hard to get rid of now. (Books, the street, companions, movies, magazines, newspapers)

I was quite shocked, but I was lucky. (Companions)

Bad effect. Caused me to want to experience these things. (Street, books, my aunt)

Good, it caused me to think more highly and to keep away from sin. (Priest, companions, mother, books)

Decidedly bad but I am gradually getting rid of the dirty ideas. (The street, companions, magazines)

At the time a bad effect because I imagined many things. (Companions, movies)

Led me into bad habits that I did not know were wrong. (Companions, street)

Good effect because when you understand it you're not likely to commit sin. (Teachers, father, doctor, priest)

Bad, I began to think about it too much. (Printed stuff)

Worked up my mind to impure imaginations. (Books, companions, magazines)

Taught me what a serious thing sex is and cleared up certain problems. (Relatives, priest, teacher)

Bad. It is the cause of my impure habit. (The street)

Gave me an awful start in life: wrong impression, bad attitude, bad habit, and still colors my thoughts. (Companions, street, movies, magazines)

Good, made me feel more tenderly toward my mother and sister. (Mother)

This information has been an incentive for me to lead as pure a life as possible. (Parents, teachers, street, priest)

The corrective effect of information from wholesome sources is seen in the following replies:

Bad effect at first but later a talk from my father straightened everything out. (Street, companions, father)

Bad until my parents found out I was wise and told me about it. (Street, parents)

Bad till I learned from a more reliable source. (Companions, teacher)

It led me into all kinds of things until I received information from my teacher, a priest, and my parents. (Companions, newspapers, books)

At first I went wrong but I prayed regularly and came through. (Companions, mother)

Then there are some who reason, "If an instructor had told it to me it probably wouldn't have had a bad effect on me like it did," while others regret that their parents did not show initiative in this matter. A senior who is of this mind writes, "I would have been much better off had I learned it in the beginning from my parents."

In an effort to learn of the extent to which boys lose confidence in their parents because of their parents' neglect in this regard, we asked

the question, *Did you lose confidence in your parents because of the way they handled the sex problem in your case?* On learning the truth, a boy may lose confidence in his parents because of their lies or evasions regarding, for example, the begetting of children. According to our findings this reaction seems to be the exception, for only 150 boys (7.5 per cent) replied "Yes" to the question we are presently considering. Three out of four (75.8 per cent) replied "No." Nearly one tenth of them were uncertain as to whether their confidence in their parents had been lessened because of the manner in which their parents handled the question of sex, while a larger number than usual (7.8 per cent) failed to respond. But of those whose confidence in their parents was shaken, the majority mention that the corrupt information which they obtained more or less clandestinely had had a very bad effect on them. It seems that as the boy grows older he comes to resent more and more the fact that his parents neglected to give him in time the proper view on sex, for there is a consistent trend for more of the older boys to admit having lost confidence in their parents just because of their neglect in this matter.

The Boy's Attitude Toward Sex

In view of the fact that the majority of our adolescents have obtained both their initial and later information on sex from unwholesome sources and that a large number ascribed a bad effect to this information, it is enlightening to see what attitudes the adolescent now harbors toward the question of sex. Naturally, his present views about sex are the result of a conglomerate mass of wholesome and unwholesome information and suggestion to which he has been exposed in the school, in the home, in the church, and elsewhere.

TABLE 32. Attitude With Which 2000 Catholic High-School Boys Usually Regard Sex

Whenever the thought of sex comes to my mind, I usually find myself regarding it as:	*No. of boys*	*Per cent*
1. Something that puzzles me	619	31.0
2. A power of creation we share with God	450	22.5
3. Something sacred	424	21.2
4. Something dirty and vulgar	406	20.3
5. A source of thrills	332	16.6
6. Something disgusting	251	12.5
7. An ever present opportunity for pleasure	246	12.3
8. Something mysterious	240	12.0
9. Lots of fun	231	11.5
10. Something fearful	122	6.1

Table 32 shows how the adolescents of our study usually regard sex.

The fact that nearly one third of the boys are puzzled over sex and the various feelings and urges consequent upon it seems to indicate

a need for a clear, straightforward explanation of the phenomena of sex and its place and purpose in life. We would like to point out that what we have in mind is only such instruction as is necessary in education to purity. We heartily agree that there is much danger in stressing the sexual phase too much, for talks on the physical side of sex quite readily become just so much dynamite. But certain facts must be told if the boy's mind is to be relieved of tension.

On the other side of the picture we are encouraged by the rather substantial number of boys who have the correct attitude toward sex. More than a fifth regard it as "a power of creation we share with God" — certainly a most praiseworthy view — while practically as many regard it as "something sacred." Of course, quite a number of the boys who expressed the former view of sex also expressed the latter; hence, in reality, only about a third of our boys harbor the correct view of sex. But even these occasionally indicate an attitude

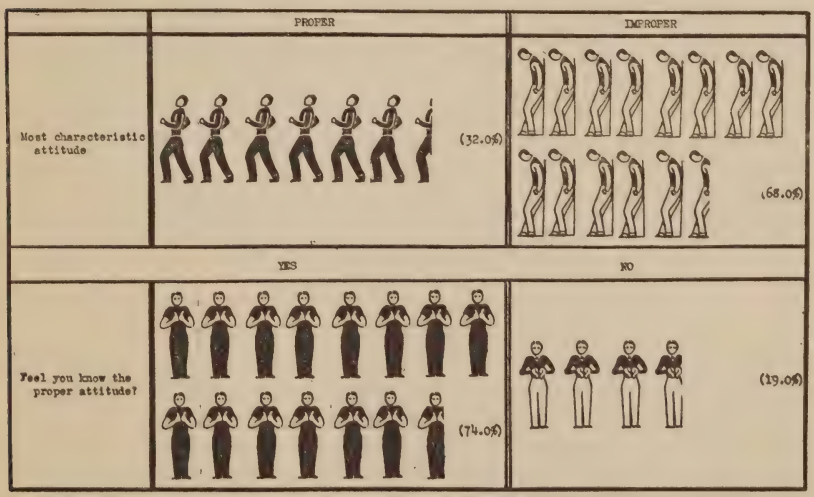

Figure 34. Attitude of Catholic boys toward sex. Each symbol represents 5 per cent of the adolescents studied.

which is far less complimentary. A boy who says he usually regards sex as "something sacred" may likewise say that he usually regards it as "lots of fun" or as "something dirty." Those who could not restrict themselves to one attitude often added, "It all depends on the circumstances in which you are." Some, whose attitude toward sex reflected their Catholic training, added, "But sometimes my reactions are not so fine."

The fact that the attitudes of the large majority of our adolescents do not reflect their Catholic training seems to be largely an effect of our failure to use a positive approach in educating to purity. We

have not placed emphasis enough on the high purpose of sex, nor have we pointed out sufficiently to the boy the fact of his being a bearer of life, a custodian of a God-given power which may not be regarded lightly. It would seem that too much emphasis has been placed on impurity and not enough on purity. The virtue has been left in the shadow while the failings have been paraded across the center of the stage. Somehow the boy comes to associate impurity with daring and attractiveness, with excitement and manliness. As a result of misrepresentation, some boys get the impression, more or less unconsciously, that the chaste man is one who is lean and gaunt with sunken eyes and all the signs of advanced anemia, instead of a manly man with ruddy cheeks and rippling muscles and bubbling over with vitality, but withal a strong will.

Yet, with the deficient training which our adolescents are receiving, as reflected in their attitudes, three fourths of them (74.4 per cent) feel that they know what should be the proper attitude toward sex. Fewer than a fifth of them (18.5 per cent) say that they do not know, while 7.1 per cent are uncertain. This means one of two things: either three out of every four boys do know what should be the proper attitude toward sex, but only one out of three actually *has* the right attitude, or that more than half of those who say they know what the correct attitude is only think they know. Perhaps they have been deluded into thinking so by their incomplete information and still less complete formation. At any rate, three fourths of our adolescents do not give evidence of possessing the correct attitude toward sex.

The Problem of Petting and Necking

The boys' views on petting and necking gave further evidence of the prevalence of improper attitudes toward sex among adolescents. Our first question on petting and necking was, *Do you think it is part of the routine of going out with a girl to pet and neck?* In reply to this question, fewer than half of our Catholic boys (48 per cent) answered "No," nearly one fourth of them (23.8 per cent) replied "Yes," while somewhat over a fourth (27.1 per cent) indicated that they were uncertain. (See Fig. 35.) The rest of the boys (1.1 per cent) offered no reply.

These figures are a rather sad commentary on the Catholic adolescent's attitude toward sex. Perhaps we should be more optimistic and look at the three fourths who do not say that petting and necking are taken for granted when high-school boys and girls go out together. But the fact that one out of every four boys does regard such conduct as part of the routine of a "date" certainly is a cause for grave concern. What is the reason for this attitude? Perhaps the boy knows that petting is wrong but attempts to rationalize his conduct on the basis of the weakening moral standards in the world about him.

No doubt the movies are a powerful influence in this matter by giving attractive sanction to modern codes of conduct. As we pointed out in a previous chapter, more than four out of every ten boys (43.7 per cent) admit that the movies have given them wrong ideas about sex, love, and petting.[46] And Blumer found that only 28 per cent of 458 high-school adolescents denied copying lovemaking techniques from the movies.[47] But regardless of the factors underlying the conduct of our adolescents when "on a date," the fact is that one fourth of them think that petting and necking is just part of the routine of their relationship with girls. As would be expected, the majority so answering are in the upper classes of the high school.

It is significant that the number who are of this opinion differs greatly from school to school. These variations may be due to differences in the environments from which these schools draw their students or differences in the programs of training offered.

Revealing, too, is a comparison between the girls' and boys' views on this matter of necking (or "smooching" as some moderns call it) and petting "on dates." (See Fig. 35.) It would seem that the boys misjudge the girls or at least the Catholic high-school girls in this matter, for Sister Mildred Knoebber, O.S.B., reports that only 10.4 per cent of the 3000 girls in her study considered necking and petting a routine part of their relationship with boys.[48] However, another study, in which the subjects were not selected according to religious status, reveals[49] that 23 per cent of the girls accepted petting as a routine part of their relationship with boys.

Boys Do Not Consider Petting and Necking Necessary for Popularity

Do the students feel that petting and necking is necessary for a boy to be popular? According to their replies, 63.2 per cent believe that it is not and 32.1 per cent think that it is. Some were uncertain (3.4 per cent) and a few did not respond (1.3 per cent). (See Fig. 35.) Of course, not all gave an unqualified answer, but 1101 boys (55 per cent) did reply point-blank that they did not think petting and necking was necessary for popularity. Three hundred and sixty-four (18.2 per cent) were just as explicit in stating that they thought it was. Among those who answered in this manner there is a consistent tendency for fewer and fewer boys as they grow older to regard necking and petting as necessary for popularity; hence, we find nearly twice as many freshmen (24 per cent) as seniors (13 per cent) who think such conduct is necessary to be popular with girls. The

[46] Cf. *supra*, 256.

[47] Herbert Blumer, *Movies and Conduct*, 44.

[48] *The Self-Revelation of the Adolescent Girl*, 110.

[49] P. M. Blanchard and C. Manasses, *New Girls for Old* (New York: The Macaulay Co., 1930), 66.

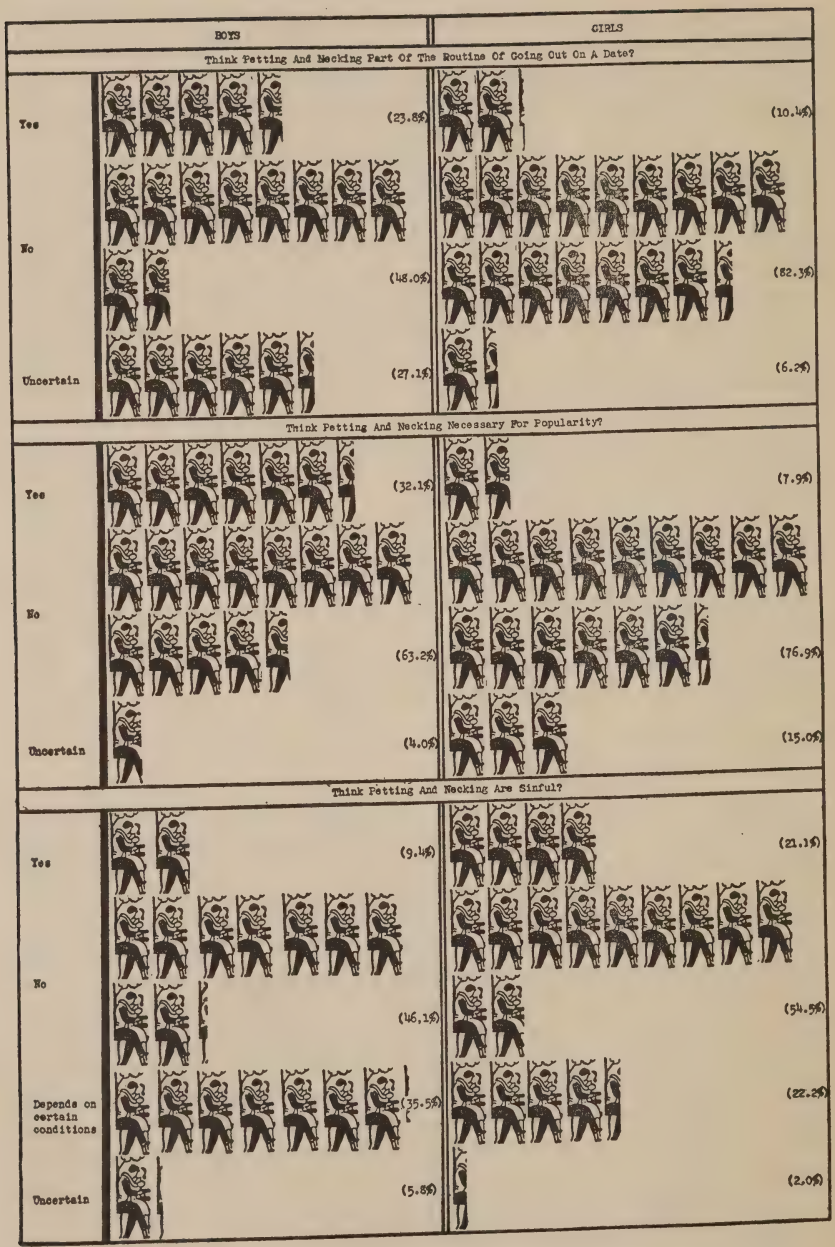

Figure 35. Catholic adolescents' view on petting and necking. Each symbol represents the opinion of 5 per cent of each group.

fact that so many of the younger adolescents are of this opinion would seem to indicate that many of them replied merely in accordance with what they have observed in the movies.

Some boys qualified their answer to the question, *Do you think petting and necking is necessary for popularity?* These boys state: "Sometimes but not always" (6 per cent), "Depends on the crowd or the girl you are with" (5.1 per cent), "No, it cheapens one and you lose respect if you do it" (2.7 per cent), "Yes, to a certain extent" (2.2 per cent), "Not with the decent kind" (2.1 per cent), "No, if you don't you gain popularity" (1.7 per cent), and "No, but it helps and it's lots of fun" (1.6 per cent).

The reader will gain a clearer insight into the adolescent's mind on this question by glancing at the following sampling of comments:

Yes, necking and petting is necessary if you want to be popular, for a girl won't go out with a fellow who's dead. If you don't do it they regard you as a wet blanket.

I certainly do not, girls in truth admire a clean, steadfast boy much more than a sinful one.

Emphatically not.

If anything it will destroy your popularity, for once it gets around you will find yourself without good dates.

The girls in our neighborhood refuse to go out with you if you don't do even worse than pet and neck.

Yes, if you want to have a good time.

Yes, I do. If you don't you are considered slow or called a flat tire.

No, I don't, and I think that is why she likes me.

In my case just a little necking is necessary.

I don't go in for it and yet I'm popular.

No, girls are not boys' toys, I respect them.

Absolutely not, it is degrading if anything.

No, it's plain silly and ruins you in her eyes.

Depends, not with the good type, they like you better if you don't.

Yes, because it's a common fad — everybody's doing it.

Yes, because the boy who doesn't neck will never get another date.

No, you have more fun without it.

No, in my opinion a girl should not allow herself to be pawed over.

Some boys added further remarks as to whether they thought it was necessary for a girl to pet and neck in order to be popular.

And it is never necessary for a girl, for the popular girl is the girl who rarely necks.

The girls who don't are usually better liked and better respected.

Girls who don't are always the most popular.

And if a girl pets and necks it's detrimental to her popularity.

However, some would agree with the junior who adds, "It is not absolutely necessary for a girl but she will naturally be more popular with the boys if she does." It is worth while to note that only 7.9 per cent of the girls themselves feel that petting and necking is a necessary condition for them to attain popularity.[50]

[50] Sister Mildred Knoebber, O.S.B., *op. cit.*, 110.

What the Boys Think the Girls Expect

Do the boys feel that the girls expect such conduct of them? According to the boys' views on this matter, which we summarize in the following table, about half of the girls do expect such conduct from them and about half do not. About 43 per cent of the boys feel that all or most of the girls they know expect them to pet or neck, while about 42 per cent of the boys feel the opposite to be true. On the one hand, one out of five boys answers, without any qualification, that girls look for such intimacies on a date, while on the other hand, practically as many reply unqualifyingly to the contrary.

TABLE 33. Extent to Which 2000 Catholic High-School Boys Think Girls Expect Necking and Petting From Them

Do you think girls expect you to pet and neck?	*No. of boys*	*Per cent*
Some do, some don't, depends on the type of girl	566	28.3
Yes, they expect you to	383	19.2
No, they don't want it	368	18.4
Uncertain	243	12.1
Not the decent kind, a good Catholic girl doesn't	125	6.3
Sometimes, depends upon how she feels	90	4.5
Most of them do	78	3.9
Most of them don't	48	2.4
Miscellaneous: Yes, after you have gone with her awhile; Yes, a certain amount of it; No, they think more of you if you don't; vague answers	86	4.3
No answer	13	.6

It is important to observe that more than three out of ten (34.6 per cent) distinguish between the type of girl who encourages such intimacies and the type of girl who does not. They are frequent in their remarks that "the worth-while or decent kind of girl does not expect such conduct."

The boys' thoughts on this problem are more clearly revealed in their comments:

After a few dates she expects you to neck a while.
Some expect a "good-night kiss" but others want to do nothing but kiss.
A few girls may, but the right kind will like and respect you a lot more if you don't.
No, but I think they want to test you.
Not certain, but most girls read trashy love novels and naturally their minds are full of that.
Silly ones do but girls with sense do not.
Yes, they do, that's the trouble with them.
In 80 per cent of the cases, yes.
No, unless she has no modesty.
It depends on the mood you catch her in.
Not the girls that I go out with.
Some girls might but the girl who really likes you will not.
Why should they? If they like a boy they want something fine.

A good clean girl would never expect it of you.
Depends on the type of girl, some urge you on, some stop you, some throw it at you.
Some do, some don't, some hope, some won't.
Yes, when the girl is plastered.
No, unless you go out with a pig.
I don't know about all girls but my girl doesn't expect it of me. She thinks it isn't nice.
Some unpopular girls do.
No, they expect me to act like a gentleman.
Yes, it is only natural after several dates.
If she is a kid, yes; if she is a lady, no.
Some do but not the kind of a girl I want to marry.
Some common moonstruck girls do, but not *real* girls.
No, it is a bother to a decent girl.
Yes, at least most of them I have taken out.
Yes, they seem to regard it as the only fun when out with you.
Not girls of culture, only the sluts do.
No, I believe she is in fear of it rather than expectation.
Yes, otherwise they think you are angry at them.
Sure, just as we expect it of them.
Yes, sir, they are the cause of most everything in that line.

It is evident from the tone of these comments that the average boy looks down upon the girl who expects or permits liberties. Though he may take advantage of her looseness, he does not fail to appraise her at her true worth.

Further, many a boy blames the girl for his own weakness in this regard. The last few comments indicate that it is the girl who sets the pace in the boy-girl relationship. If she does not conform to high standards, he will not be slow in taking advantage of the fact. As Owen Francis Dudley has pointed out:

> The way in which a girl is treated by her lover depends for the most part on herself. She must know when to stop his advances, or, in modern Hollywood, she mustn't let him get fresh. If she does, he'll get fresher. A man never respects a girl who allows liberties.[51]

The boy who replied, "Sure, just as we expect it of them," represents an attitude which is rather common among certain boys. They seem to think that when a girl is affectionate she feels the same physical urge that the boy feels and that she is just as passionate as he. They are apparently unaware of the differences in the biological and psychological reactions of the sexes. This phase of their instruction in purity seems to have been neglected.

Differences in the Reactions of the Sexes

Perhaps if both boys and girls understood that God has given each a different nature with a different degree of susceptibility to feeling, that love in the boy is chiefly physical, while in the girl it is chiefly

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[51] "Courtship Has Its Dangers," *The Preservation of the Faith,* 12 (1939), 11–12.

psychic,[52] there would be much less misunderstanding on the part of each in interpreting each other's conduct. The girl wishes nothing more than to show her affection and receive the boy's marks of affection in return; she desires merely the emotional thrill that comes from being secure in the arms of her lover. And when her boy friend returns her affection with an equally warm embrace and a kiss, she believes that he has the same intentions as she has. She has no idea of the vehemence of his passion or of how he may be struggling to control the fierce physical urge which she has aroused within him. She is aware of only her own impulse to love and be loved in return. This probably explains why so many of the girls are found by the boys to welcome petting and necking. It likewise explains why so many of the boys look upon girls who encourage such intimacies as degraded. Actually, in many of the cases the girl has no base intentions at all, but the boy interprets her love responses in view of his own feelings and hence regards her as low minded.

Relative to the failure on the part of boys and girls to understand the physiological foundation for the differences in each other, Cooper has the following to say:

> If each understood the other's nature and impulses better, their courtship problems would not, it is true, be solved 100 per cent, but there would be notably fewer slips, more mutual consideration and protection, less liberties, and more ennobling and purifying love on its highest levels.[53]

That many of the problems of the adolescent do take their rise at this point is evident both in our present findings and in data which we shall have an opportunity to present later. This fact is likewise borne out by the recent study of O. M. Butterfield who, in investigating the love problems of 1196 adolescents, found that "the most frequent source of perplexity in this field had to do with problems of personal familiarity while on dates: kissing, fondling, and caressing."[54]

Even minor lovemaking, according to Peck and Wells, increases difficulties in this field.[55] In their study, 186 college graduate men report that the chances, in minor lovemaking, are 10 to 1 that such conduct will increase the sexual cravings and the difficulty of controlling them, while twenty Catholic doctors, when consulted on this same question, reported that "lovemaking, petting, and kissing ordinarily arouse passion from which few young men are immune."[56]

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[52] Felix M. Kirsch, O.F.M.Cap., *Sex Education in Training in Chastity,* 312.

[53] John M. Cooper, *Religion Outlines for Colleges,* Course IV (Washington, D. C.: Catholic Education Press, 1937), 103.

[54] *Love Problems of Adolescence* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1939), abstract, *Teachers College Record,* 41 (1939), 160–161.

[55] M. W. Peck and F. L. Wells, "On the Psycho-Sexuality of College Graduate Men," *Mental Hygiene,* 7 (1923), 697–714.

[56] Felix M. Kirsch, O.F.M.Cap., *op. cit.,* 321.

Boys Do Not Consider Petting and Necking Sinful

That petting, in the sense of a promiscuous play-at-love, is morally objectionable there can be little doubt. Though necking, in the currently understood sense of kissing and caressing, may be morally less objectionable, yet if one is highly inflammable, and most boys of high-school age are, a kiss may be an occasion of sin, even a proximate occasion. "It is almost impossible for young people, whom nature has made quite inflammable, to indulge in violent kissing or kissing for any length of time without having passion enter in."[57] With our modern adolescents, necking or "smooching" is usually understood to approach some phase of this latter type of physical contact.

TABLE 34. Views of 2000 Catholic High-School Boys Regarding the Sinfulness of Petting and Necking

Do you think petting and necking is sinful?	*No. of boys*	*Per cent*
No	922	46.1
No, if you don't go too far	247	12.4
Yes	188	9.4
Yes, sometimes	130	6.5
Uncertain	117	5.8
No, but it may lead to sin or become an occasion of sin	80	4.0
It depends on your intention	51	2.6
Depends on the way it is done, not if done in the right way	39	2.0
No, not if restricted to necking	35	1.8
No, not if passion is not aroused or if it doesn't give you bad thoughts	33	1.6
Depends on the effect it has on you	31	1.5
Miscellaneous: Depends on circumstances; No, it is a natural thing to do; Not sinful, but not very nice; vague answers	105	5.2
No answer	22	1.1

To see to what extent our high-school boys find problems in this field, as well as to measure to some extent the effectiveness with which our Catholic schools are teaching our young people how to apply the moral principles to this phase of their conduct, we asked the question, *Do you think petting and necking is sinful?* To this nearly half of the boys (46.1 per cent) replied point-blank, "No," while less than one out of ten (9.4 per cent) replied "Yes." Five and eight tenths per cent of the boys were uncertain, 6.5 per cent said "Yes, sometimes," and three out of ten (29 per cent) qualified their answers by stating more or less vaguely the conditions when petting and necking might become sinful; but almost all of these seem to accept the idea that such intimacies can be indulged in without committing sin, provided one does not go too far. The various replies are presented more in detail in Table 34. The reader will note that only a very few made a distinction between petting and necking.

[57] Daniel A. Lord, S.J., *Some Notes on the Guidance of Youth,* 120.

According to our findings, the number of boys who do not regard petting and necking as sinful is five times greater than the number of those who do regard it as such.[58] Perhaps we should not be surprised at this ratio, for O'Neill,[59] in a study of the moral principles of high-school freshmen, found that 94 per cent of them did not regard petting a mortal sin, and that only 5 per cent considered sexual excitement sinful. Girls appear to have a better developed moral sense, or to be better enlightened in this matter than boys, for when high-school girls were asked whether they thought petting and necking was sinful, more than a fifth of them (21.1 per cent) replied "Yes," while an additional 22.2 per cent modified their answer, expressing the conditions necessary to make it sinful.[60]

From the various replies that the boys give, it is evident that many have adopted false principles of morality. The boys' lack of appreciation of the correct moral principles governing this phase of their relationship with girls is more clearly brought out by many of their comments:

Petting and necking is not exactly sinful but if it is done it should be done in private.
It is sinful unless you love the girl and intend to marry her.
No, it is only a venial sin.
Not wrong if done at parties.
Not if you don't go too far, but it is O.K. if the girl is your steady.
No, we are made that way by God.
Yes, and dang hard to tell in Confession.
Not always. If the girl wants to play — okay; if not and you force her because of your superior strength it's wrong.
It will lead to sin but it is not a sin itself.
It isn't sinful but it is kind of silly.
No, but you should wait until you are almost out of high school before you start it.
Depends on how far you go, just plain necking isn't.
Kissing, no, but anything worse, yes.
There is a fine distinction which I don't know. (A senior)
Not if you don't do it passionately and if you do it with the girl's consent.
If it goes too far to interfere with studies, yes, otherwise not.
Not if done for fun or love, but some do it as a starter.
With moderation, no; with excess, yes; it is ungentlemanly at best.
Not as long as you stick to petting.
No, I do not think there is anything even dishonorable about it.
I'm rather puzzled, I think it is making little of sacred affections, but it is so common.

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[58] *Fortune* Magazine (December, 1942, 14, 18) in a survey of high-school students found that 41.8 per cent of the boys said that necking did little if any harm. According to their sampling, Protestants seemed more strait-laced in this regard than Catholics and Jews.

[59] *A Study of the Moral Principles Relative to the Sixth and Ninth Commandments of 900 High School Freshman Students,* 33, 17.

[60] Sister Mildred Knoebber, O.S.B., *The Self-Revelation of the Adolescent Girl,* 110.

I don't think it is. If it is, I haven't been told.
It can't be sinful because everybody does it.
Not sinful if you really like the girl.
I don't know; this bothers me.
Not sinful, but very vulgar.
I don't regard it as sinful as long as it doesn't come to intercourse.
No, it is simply a natural impulse; you can't help it.
Absolutely not, I don't see anything against the law of God in it.

These comments offer sufficient evidence of the erroneous views held by a large proportion of boys regarding the morality of what is permitted in the boy-girl relationship. At times it would almost seem that some of the boys were doing wishful thinking when they answered our question, especially those who are so positive that there is nothing wrong with petting and necking.

It is rather striking that quite a few boys seem to place the responsibility for such conduct on the girl, saying that if she permits it, it is all right. A number of others harbor the false notion that if two young people love each other, or if they are "going steady," there is nothing sinful about such intimacies. Many others seem to feel that petting and necking has no moral implications whatsoever. For them the important questions are: "Does petting and necking reflect good manners?" "Is it vulgar?" "Is it nice?" According to their way of thinking, anything short of masturbation or intercourse seems to fall outside the sphere of morals. It is here where we see the results of the power and influence of modern environment, vile magazines, and movies. As the reader will recall, more than 40 per cent of our adolescents admitted having been influenced by the movies in regard to petting.[61]

It is quite evident that many of the young man's problems, both present and future, spring from the moral problems which we have just considered. It is evident, too, that our findings challenge us to adopt more effective and more practical methods in teaching the moral principles which both guide and help our young people to lead purer and happier lives.

When presenting these moral principles to our adolescents, together with the supernatural motives for observing them, we shall be wise if we likewise stress the natural reasons for refraining from petting and necking.[62] Natural motives are very appealing because they in-

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[61] Cf. *supra*, 256.

[62] Dr. M. J. Exner in *The Question of Petting* (New York: Association Press, 1933), 1–14, points out that the development of the youth's personality and subsequent happiness depends greatly upon the cultivation of the affections during the adolescent years; that abandonment to physical impulses blinds to discrimination and higher values and in the end brings disillusionment and misery; that petting is self-limiting, inevitably shuts out the best — it can never satisfy the higher psychic longings; that by frittering away emotional capacities on the cheap level of petting, one is likely never to know the ecstasy, richness, expanding and compelling power of love at its best. Bakewell Morrison, S.J., in *Character Formation*, 141, lists the results of petting

volve concrete and immediate objectives. But the supernatural must be stressed. Young people must realize that chastity is a gift of God and consequently the religious helps of Confession, Holy Communion, and prayer are indispensable. Adolescents must be led to see that these supernatural aids are their strongest helps in maintaining their purity.

Furthermore, in developing motives for chastity in the adolescent, the inculcation of reverence must not be overlooked, for reverence, a sort of deep respect mingled with love and awe, is the bulwark of purity. Reverence is the secret of all virtue and happiness. As Kirsch points out in his excellent booklet, *In Defense of Chastity,* "No human being can be good or truly happy without chastity. Rob any human being of chastity and you take from him his self-respect; for chastity is essentially reverence for one's self — a clean body and a pure soul."[63] But this reverence must be taught. The adolescent must be shown why he should have reverence for himself and for others. It must be pointed out to him that the body which God gave him is really His temple, for He dwells within him, that his soul is made to God's image and likeness, that God's grace makes him His child, and that the Church recognizes this sacredness of the human body by anointing and consecrating it in the various sacraments. Such an approach impresses the boy with the necessity of reverence for his body and thus lays the foundation for a life of purity and happiness.

Boys Worry Over Purity and Sex Problems

Thus far we have seen that the majority of our adolescents do not know what constitutes a sin in regard to petting and necking. Earlier we noted how one fifth of them stated that they were not clear as to what was a sin in regard to purity, how nearly half of them felt that they should be given more specific rules as to what constituted an impure thought, word, or action, and how practically the same number asked that the school give an adequate explanation of the matter of purity. We have also seen how the majority have been introduced to the subject of sex through unwholesome or corrupt sources. In view of these findings it would be helpful to see to what extent the boy finds his problems in this field so perplexing as to be a cause of worry, hence the question, *Do you worry much over sex or purity difficulties?*

Over half of the boys (51.6 per cent) replied that they worried considerably over sex or purity difficulties, while 48.2 per cent said

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on character; how it weakens self-control, lowers ideals, deteriorates reverence and respect for women, increases difficulties in controlling imagination and desires, saps the capacity of innocent fun, ruins the girl's chances, and proves a source of suspicion that will darken the sunshine of postnuptial happiness.

[63] (Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1938), 7.

that they only rarely worried about such difficulties. A few (.2 per cent) ignored the question. Of those who do worry considerably over sex and purity, more than 40 per cent add that their problems bother them frequently.

In studying these replies according to age groups, we note a tendency for the older boy to be much more concerned over purity difficulties than the younger boy; thus we find 37.8 per cent of the freshmen, 51.4 per cent of the sophomores, 58 per cent of the juniors, and 59 per cent of the seniors who say that they worry over problems concerning sex or purity.

Other studies in this field tend to confirm our findings. Walter L. Hughes found that 50 per cent of the boys in his study reported that they had worried over matters concerning sex,[64] while O'Neill says that 47 per cent of the subjects of his investigation thought that there was something wrong with them because they suffered nocturnal pollutions.[65] Among the causes of worry listed more frequently in the Hughes study were: masturbation, emissions, sex necessity, and erections.

Many a pure boy blessed with a robust body and vigorous health thinks himself "no good" because he is tempted by sex thoughts and disturbed by erotic movements. The boy's mind should be relieved; he should be told that such feelings are not sinful but normal, that according to the laws of biology every ordinary normal individual experiences such sexual reactions with which are naturally connected venereal satisfaction. But instead, many a parent increases the young persons' anxiety by feigning unnatural and excessive disturbance whenever problems of sex and purity are approached. If parents would only respond naturally and point out the sacredness of these normal sexual reactions, they would tear off the cloak of mystery surrounding many a skeleton of worry and leave only the satisfying framework of truth.

Another frequent source of mental uneasiness is the problem of self-abuse. Bits of misinformation picked up at tainted sources have given the boy most distorted views concerning his difficulties in this field. He may even attribute the temptations which seem to have fastened the habit on him to the sins of his ancestors for which he is being punished, or to some form of incipient insanity or physical defect. Very often he begins to worry whether, after all, he is not abnormal.

The consequences, too, of this sinful habit, are a frequent source of worry for many. Pullias found that 83 per cent of the young men in his study believed that masturbation had a seriously damaging

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[64] "Sex Experiences of Boyhood," *Journal of Social Hygiene*, 12 (1926), 262–273.
[65] O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 33.

effect upon one, causing physical defects, insanity, or other forms of mental damage.[66] Some adolescents who have trouble with this habit feel that they have irretrievably and seriously damaged themselves and that their mind is going to deteriorate as a result.

It is wrong to terrify adolescents with such misinformation concerning the physical consequences of this sin. On the other hand, it may be well to point out to the boy that if the habit of self-abuse is excessive it may impair his physical condition in that the internal secretions are wasted[67] instead of being carried by the blood to muscle, bone, and brain. It may be well, too, to point out the strain which it may place on the nervous system and the effects it may have on the individual's personality, sapping his self-confidence and self-respect and the possibility of its rendering him shy, secretive, and melancholic. But this teaching must not be such as to upset the adolescent to the extent of rendering his problems in this field all the more difficult. Point out to the boy that his chastity is the interweaving of his moral code, his nervous system, his physical being, and you will furnish him with an added natural motive for maintaining his purity. It will help him realize what we mean when we say that a few moments of yielding to a fleeting pleasure may profoundly alter this interwoven fabric.

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[66] E. V. Pullias, "Masturbation as a Mental Hygiene Problem — a Study of the Beliefs of 75 Young Men," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology,* 23 (1937), 216–222.

[67] Felix M. Kirsch, O.F.M.Cap., *Sex Education and Training in Chastity,* 258.

V

PROBLEMS OF THE ADOLESCENT IN THE REALM OF SELF

Chapter 16

REBUFFS, WORRIES, AND DOUBTS

Back of all the problems which the adolescent may experience in the realm of his family, school, or social life are the further reactions which these problems may prompt in the realm of the adolescent's innermost self. Permeating every phase of his life, interrelating all his activities is this dynamic self, the center of all he is and of what he hopes to be, the home of his ideals and secret ambitions. It is within this inner sanctuary of his personality that reactions are constantly registered, prompting a flush of joy if adjustments in the world of reality are satisfactory; depressing, complicating, or distressing if conflict is the result. Behind a veil of carefully guarded actions lurk doubts and fears, moods and worries, remaining to taunt and puzzle the adolescent in the innermost realm of his being. The hidden struggles of his spirit to overcome discouragement, to resolve doubts, and to get possession of himself in an attack of sadness are problems not likely to be revealed to the casual observer. It is these struggles which go on within the boy's innermost self which we intend to analyze in the present chapter.

By putting questions relative to these various interior reactions we have attempted to get an insight into the complex variety of difficulties which the adolescent experiences in his efforts at making adjustments to his "new" self as he meets reverses in his expanding environment.

Reaction to Life as a Whole

Before considering the extent of problems in the realm of self as revealed by the boy's detailed reactions to his various difficulties, we sought, by a few general questions, his summary reaction to his life as a whole. Since adolescence is primarily a period of new adjustments, it is quite possible that reactions may be aroused, especially if not understood, which will render the adolescent's life quite unhappy. The mere fact of growing into maturity necessitates the living of a more complex life and the assuming of new responsibilities. As Raphael McCarthy points out, "Adolescence involves physical and mental changes that are pronounced and relatively sudden";[1] intellectual questions, emotional upheavals, and bodily transformations all call for new adjustments that might have unsatisfactory repercussions in the self.

[1] *Training the Adolescent*, 240.

The adolescent's feeling of uncertainty about his own position and his own worth make him more self-conscious; his bodily development makes him sex conscious; and his emotional development makes him social conscious. This refocusing of attention may prove quite irritating to the unstable adolescent and upset his life emotionally. To get some indication of the extent to which the many problems of adjustment which confront the adolescent during this "period of ferment" render his life unhappy, we asked the question, *Is your life at present happy?* and followed it later in the problemmaire with *Do you feel pretty well satisfied with the life you have to live?* The replies to these two questions give us an overview of how the adolescent's problems affect his life. To the former question, over three fourths of the boys (77.3 per cent) reply that, taking everything into consideration, their life at present is happy, despite problems of adjustment which may darken certain phases of it. One out of five (19.6 per cent) indicates that there are times when his life is happy but there are too many dark clouds blocking out the sunshine of happiness, to say that his life in general is happy. Then there are a few (3.1 per cent) who are uncertain of their general reaction. To the latter question, which came later in the problemmaire as a check, practically the same number indicate that they are "pretty well satisfied" with the life they have to live. In the former question, 77.3 per cent and in the latter 77.9 per cent indicate that they are happy and satisfied with their life as they have to live it. (See Fig. 36.) This is just another proof of the reliability of our data — less than .6 per cent difference in the responses to two differently worded questions asking for the same information.

It would seem, then, that one out of every five boys in high school is not satisfied with the life he has to live. Difficulties of environment and problems of adjustment combine to render his life unhappy. When we recall that the adolescent tends naturally to be lighthearted and gay, we can realize what a depressing effect a life of unhappiness must have upon him.

A point not to be missed at this juncture is the tendency for more of the older boys than the younger to characterize their life as unhappy. This is probably due to the increased demands made upon the older boy, not only by those in his environment but also by his own growing consciousness of the need of accepting responsibilities in the face of emphasized feelings of inadequacy.

It is often said that happiness during adolescence depends on whether or not the years preceding adolescence were happy. For this reason we asked the boy, *Did you have a happy childhood?* More than nine out of ten (92.2 per cent) replied "Yes"; only 3.9 per cent replied "No," while an equal number were uncertain. It would seem that the increase in the number of those who say their life is unhappy at present is due to the increased difficulties of adolescence. Some who

knew how to meet the difficulties of childhood with satisfaction have not been so successful in making the required adjustments on the adolescent level. Another factor accounting for the difference in the number of those who say that their lives were happy in childhood but unhappy at present may be that "distance lends enchantment to the view."

The Boy's Health

Two other questions which called forth a general appraisal, on the part of the adolescent, of his own life were: *Are you satisfied with your health?* and *Do you feel satisfied with your character?* In view of the fact that the smallest amount of illness, both disabling and nondisabling, occurs between the years fifteen and twenty four,[2] we would not expect a large number of our subjects to be dissatisfied with their health. Nor is there much dissatisfaction, for more than eight out of ten (81.2 per cent) are satisfied with their health. Less than one out of six (15.7 per cent) says the contrary, while a few (3.1 per cent) could not decide whether they were satisfied or not. (See Fig. 36.) Health, therefore, is a minor problem for the average adolescent boy, but it is an all-absorbing one for those not blessed with it. Some who complained of their health took this opportunity to explain that they were disturbed over their short stature. Especially was this true among the freshmen. Perhaps much of the concern of those thus perturbed would be alleviated if they only knew that about one third of those initially classified as "short" have reason to expect a rating of "median stature" at a later examination. Adolescents who fall into this class should be told that short boys do not tend to stay in their classification as do tall or median boys. None of the boys complained of being too large or too tall; this is more of a problem with girls.

Somewhat allied to the question of health is the question of nervous stability. With the stepped-up pace of modern living furnishing more patients every year for the hospitals of nervous and mental disorders — to such an extent that it is estimated that one out of every ten now in school will be admitted to a hospital for nervous disorders some time during his life[3] — this question becomes one of vital interest to parents and educators alike. Unless students learn while young how to handle their nervous tendencies, all the rest of their learning will be of little avail. At the present time, one out of every four boys

[2] Selwyn D. Collins, "The Health of Youth," The *Annals* of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 194 (1937), 87–98.

[3] W. H. McHugh, "The American Youth Problem," *Catholic Educational Review,* 36 (1938), 257–267. W. Carson Ryan, in his book, *Mental Health Through Education* (New York: The Commonwealth Fund, 1938, 2), says, "More of the boys and girls now in secondary schools will eventually find their way into hospitals for mental disease than into college."

(24.1 per cent) in our high schools says that he is inclined to be nervous, and a few (5.2 per cent) are doubtful about their nervous condition, but seven out of ten (70.7 per cent) claim that they are not inclined to be nervous. However, since one out of every four boys has nervous tendencies, there is sufficient reason for teachers to be on the alert for problems arising therefrom. Evidently the nervous strain experienced by these boys is only a temporary condition which will disappear when they have passed through the changes of this period. On the other hand, these nervous disorders may culminate in attitudes and habits which may handicap the adolescent for years to come. Hence, the teacher should devote special attention to those students who display symptoms of nervousness. As we have pointed out so frequently, the insecurity and lack of stability of which the adolescent is so overconscious is sufficiently unnerving in itself to put him on edge, let alone any added difficulties that may come from a conviction of being doomed to nervousness. For this reason, if the adolescent is given to understand that he will outgrow in a year or two his temporary nervous unrest, much will be done in the way of restoring confidence in his own ability to control himself.

The Boy's Character

Nearly two thirds of the boys (63.5 per cent) state that they are satisfied with their character. But typically enough, more than a fourth of the boys (27.2 per cent) are dissatisfied with themselves. (See Fig. 36.) To these we may add another group (9.3 per cent) who do not feel satisfied with their character but cannot make up their mind to say they are dissatisfied. Some who are not satisfied with themselves go to the trouble of mentioning their instability and lack of perseverance; others add a word about other faults which they wish they could get rid of, such as "bad talk," "laziness," " a certain habit." Still others voice just a vague desire for improvement, perhaps merely an outcropping of adolescent idealism. At any rate, though it is an unsettling problem for the boy to be dissatisfied with his own character, it is a wholesome sign when nearly one third of the boys show this healthy desire for improving themselves.

Summarizing, it would seem that in nearly three out of four cases the adolescent is fairly well satisfied, taking everything into consideration, both with his own life and with the conditions in which he finds himself.

Our next series of questions take us behind the scenes in the adolescent's innermost self where we shall learn of his inward reactions to the complex world of reality. We shall see to what extent the conflicts he meets with in his attempts at adjustment make him discouraged, create fears, and cause him to worry.

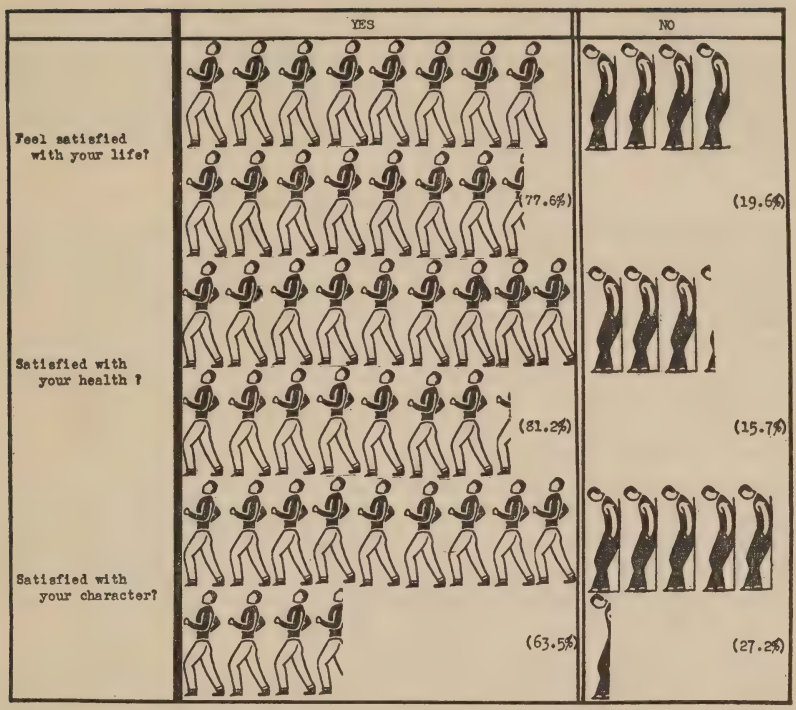

Figure 36. Extent to which our adolescents are satisfied with themselves. Each figure represents the opinion of 5 per cent of the boys.

Life Too Complicated

It is sometimes said that the adolescent just merging into the world of adults is overwhelmed by its complexity and retires into his own little world of boyhood, regarding his wider world as beyond his comprehension. The extent to which this is true of the adolescent on the high-school level is found in the answers to the following question which we asked the 2000 subjects of our study, *Have you ever felt that life is too complicated to understand what it is all about?*

Almost six out of every ten boys (58 per cent) replied that they had this experience at least occasionally, while nearly one out of six (15.5 per cent) said he frequently had felt this way about life. Four out of ten (41.9 per cent), however, are apparently fairly well adjusted to life, for they replied that they had never had the experience of feeling that life was too complicated to understand what it was all about.

To feel that life is too complex to be understood is a complicating problem in itself and one that has a puzzling and depressing effect,

especially on the adolescent who is quite concerned over the feelings of indefiniteness within his own self. It would seem, then, that more than half of the boys on the high-school level do experience this difficulty more or less frequently. A study of the incidence of this problem on the different age levels within the high school reveals no significant differences.

Fear and Discouragement

If over half of the adolescents are repulsed in their efforts at trying to understand the adult world because of its complexity, what percentage of them fear the responsibilities that await them in this complex world? According to our findings, one third (33.9 per cent) of the boys fear the responsibilities of adulthood, but over half (56.7 per cent) do not. The rest (9.4 per cent) were either uncertain or unwilling to respond.

Fear of Adult Responsibilities

The majority of the boys who do not fear their future responsibilities evidently feel that increased ability will come to them with increased age. Then, too, some may reason that they will be able to take care of the duties that await them in their own sphere of action even though they do not understand the whole scheme of life into which their work will fit as only a small part.

But the third who do fear the responsibilities that await them in the future offer a problem which tends to slow up their own maturation as well as make future adjustments all the more difficult. Where their fears originate in this matter would be difficult to say, but it is quite certain that parents, especially mothers, who keep their sons tied to their apron strings too long, foster such an attitude of fear. They deprive the boy of opportunities of learning to shoulder responsibility. Not given the chance to show his initiative or to experience the ego-developing effects of responsibility well borne, he does not really comprehend what he is capable of doing. Therefore, the very thought of having responsibility shifted onto his shoulders calls forth a shudder that turns his thoughts longingly backward in a desire for a continuance of the carefree days of boyhood where the solicitude of parents shielded him from the least share of responsibility.

Fears about later responsibilities were found to be most common among seniors and least common among sophomores and juniors. Perhaps during his sophomore and junior years the boy feels relatively secure and prefers not to devote too much attention to the duties which lie ahead. But as the boy begins his final year, the prospect of his future begins to occupy a more prominent position among his anxieties. According to our findings, 40 per cent of the seniors are fearful of their future responsibilities and 48 per cent are not; 31 per cent of the juniors are fearful of their future responsi-

bilities and 61 per cent are not. The incidence of this problem tends to be higher among freshmen than it is among students in the two succeeding years. This may be due to the fact that these boys were in high school only a month at the time that they answered our problem-maire, and hence their responsibilities for the next four years were still quite vague and therefore all the more disturbing.

Easily Discouraged

Though mistakes and rebuffs are the price adolescents have to pay in growing to maturity, it is important that they do not become discouraged, for thus confidence in self is lost and effort sinks to a dangerously low level. To sound out the presence of discouragement among our high-school boys we asked them, *Do you easily become discouraged?*

The replies to this question are fairly well divided. Nearly half (45.3 per cent) replied "Rarely," but almost as many (43.7 per cent) admitted that they become discouraged rather easily. However, only one out of seven (14 per cent) says that discouragement is a matter of frequent occurrence; the majority (29.7 per cent) of those who become easily discouraged, have this experience only occasionally. The ebullient spirit of youth is manifest in the majority of the boys; clouds may darken their lives but the sun of hope usually comes out again and they are willing to keep on trying. But those who become easily discouraged, especially those who frequently find this their problem, offer a challenge to parents and teachers alike. These must be handled with care lest their disheartening experiences prove a serious detriment to their growth; these need praise which will go far toward restoring confidence in themselves.

Need for Praise

Since a desire for praise is found in every human heart, it must have been put there for a noble purpose. Hence, it is our duty so to meet this need in our young people that it may help them to do their best and thus bring out the best that is in them. We must never forget that "to praise people at the proper time with the proper motive is the highest form of charity."[4] Too many seem to save the bouquets for the grave.

The teacher will understand the adolescent's need for praise when he recalls that nearly half of our adolescents admit that they are easily discouraged. This need is further emphasized if we recall the underlying reason for the boy's discouragement. It is simply that the adolescent is not sure of himself. One who is sure of himself can laugh in the face of criticism or reverses, but not one who is feeling his way and looking for encouraging signs to convince himself that he

[4] *Sister* M. Viola Blissenbach, O.F.M., "Praise as a Factor in Religious Education," *Catholic School Journal,* 38 (1938), 199–202.

is on the right road, and that he really has a chance of achieving something worth while. Because the adolescent lacks self-confidence, he needs someone to encourage him and to bolster up his faith in his own efforts at attaining his ideals.

Leaders of youth who would bring out the best that is in their students must deal with their charges as they are, but this does not mean being blind to their possibilities; rather it implies pointing out their good qualities and achievements that they may be encouraged. An instructive example of a practical application of at least one aspect of this principle is embodied in the famous funeral oration delivered by Pericles at the close of the first campaign of the Peloponnesian War. It was the custom in Ancient Greece, after a battle had been fought, to have a leading orator deliver a funeral oration to the people assembled at the burial of their fallen countrymen. Seeing deeply into the temperament of his discouraged people, Pericles vividly outlined for them the growth and development of Athenian institutions; he reminded them anew of their wonderful intellectual advantage, and he pointed out with emphasis their moral and social virtues. In a word, he encouraged them by holding up before them their own better selves. And thus it was that he sent them to their homes with new courage and resolution. That was a great day in ancient Athens. And it is a great day, too, for many a boy floundering on the reef of discouragement, when some understanding teacher takes him aside, sympathetically reveals to him his own better self, and sends him forth encouraged, highly resolved to conquer where he has fallen.

While periods of discouragement have a depressing effect upon the developing boy, so likewise fear hampers his ability to meet successfully the problems of life and thus jeopardizes further his personal security. While fear is a never failing symptom of faulty adaptation to the actual conditions of life, it is only in part a consequence of this lack of adaptation. As Allers[5] points out, fear is to a far greater extent a cause of faulty adaptation, and hence the adolescent who is a victim of fear finds himself in a vicious circle: he is afraid because he feels he is not equal to the demands of his environment, and he fails to meet these demands because he is afraid.

Fear of Failure

How prevalent are grave fears among high-school boys? According to our findings, less than half (44.8 per cent) of the boys are free from fears. The rest, outside of the few (1.5 per cent) who gave no reply, state that there are certain things in their life which they regard with considerable fear.

There is a much greater readiness on the part of freshmen to report

[5] *Psychology of Character*, 115.

no fears than there is on the part of the seniors. Thus, we find only 46 per cent of the freshmen and 47 per cent of the sophomores, but 54 per cent of the juniors and 68 per cent of the seniors designating one or more subjects which prompt a fear reaction within them. The differences can possibly be attributed to the serious-mindedness of the older boys. At least, judging from the subjects of their fears, this would seem to be the case.

TABLE 35. Subjects About Which 2000 Catholic High-School Boys Have Their Gravest Fears

What do you fear most?	*No. of boys*	*Per cent*
Nothing	896	44.8
Failure, especially in school	180	9.0
Falling into mortal sin, temptations, bad girls	163	8.2
Impurity, the habit of, or consequences of	128	6.4
Hell, loss of heaven, dying in sin	123	6.2
Death of self or parents	117	5.9
My future, responsibilities, life turn out worthless, failure to get a job	84	4.2
Injury, accident, physical pain	58	2.9
God, judgment	57	2.9
My parents' finding me out and their punishing me	56	2.8
What others think of me, unpopularity, being awkward socially	50	2.5
Sickness, disease, insanity	43	2.2
Miscellaneous: Getting into trouble and fights with bigger boys, darkness and storms, going to Confession, unhappiness at home, my conscience, financial embarrassment, disgrace, being poor, war, loss of girl friend, offending someone	112	5.6
No answer	30	1.5

In analyzing the boys' replies to the question, *What do you fear most?* we note that fear of failure is more frequently mentioned than any other single item; nearly one out of every ten boys indicates he fears failure most. Those who designated their future as a subject of their fears likewise had this same idea in mind. It is quite easy to understand why adolescents should be so much concerned about failure, for such an experience tends to confirm them in their own suspicion that they are not talented, and thus the little self-confidence they enjoy is shattered.

It is interesting to note the extent to which the eternal truths are uppermost in the minds of these boys. One out of every seven mentions the fear of death, judgment, or hell as his greatest fear. Judging from the remarks of most of the boys in this category, they have in the back of their mind the punishment that awaits them should their life be suddenly snuffed out while in the state of mortal sin, and here again many are explicit and say "while in the state of impurity." It is most heartening to note that nearly one out of every ten boys

lists falling into sin as his greatest fear. Those blessed with this added motive come largely from the freshman and sophomore classes. Table 35 shows other sources of fear mentioned by the students, but most of them are listed by boys from the upper classes.

We obtain a still better insight into the adolescent's fears when we read through a random sampling of his remarks in which we have his fears expressed in his own words:

I think the thing I fear most is hell and bigger boys.
Dying in mortal sin after being out with a girl the night before.
Getting caught with a dirty book.
Choosing the wrong vocation.
Dad's losing his job.
That I might give way sometime to a sin of impurity.
Death, what I'll do when dad and mom are gone.
That I'm not honest enough in Confession.
When I am out of school there will be no openings for me.
Failure in the world, not be able to live up to my dad's reputation.
That I won't pass in my examinations.
I fear sin, but it seems impossible to overcome the temptation when alone.
That I will turn out to be a good-for-nothing tramp.
Sudden death without making a good Confession.
My parents finding out how much I know about sex.
That a certain habit will make a physical wreck out of me.
Getting caught stealing.
Having to face God after so many impure acts.

Worries

It would seem that the majority of the adolescent's graver fears are such that are likely to prove a source of worry. But to what extent does the adolescent worry? Does he worry easily? And if so, what does he worry about most? We shall answer these questions by presenting the replies received from the subjects of our study to similar questions put to them.

Four Out of Ten Worry Easily

First of all, do our high-school boys worry easily? Slightly more than four out of ten (41.3 per cent) say they do, but more than half (53 per cent) say they do not. About one twentieth (5.3 per cent) do not know whether they do or not and a few (.4 per cent) give no indication either way. A study of the individual replies indicates that there is a slight but consistent tendency for more and more boys to say they worry easily as they become older.

Secondly, what do these boys worry about most? Our findings on this point are summarized in Table 36.

Our data show that nearly half of the boys mention success in their studies as their principal worry, while practically the same number (47.5 per cent) mention financial difficulties in the family, welfare of parents, and other problems within the home as the subject about

TABLE 36. Subjects About Which High-School Boys Most Frequently Worry

Rank	*What things do you worry about most?*	*No. of boys*	*Per cent*
1.	School, studies, examinations, marks	891	44.6
2.	Home conditions, health and welfare of parents and others in the family	475	23.8
3.	Financial difficulties of the family, debts, dad out of work	473	23.7
4.	My future, vocation, being successful	168	8.4
5.	Religious matters: impurity, sin, sex, temptations	140	7.0
6.	My girl, girl-friend troubles, date money	95	4.8
7.	Getting a job or holding on to one	92	4.6
8.	Social relations: inability to make friends, what others think of me, shyness	89	4.5
9.	Sickness, poor health	88	4.4
10.	Athletics: outcome of game, my lack of ability in sports	63	3.2
11.	Miscellaneous: personal defects, "getting caught," mistakes, accidents, death, hell, etc.	178	8.9

which they worry most. It is apparent that quite a number of boys who say they do not worry easily nevertheless mention certain subjects about which they do worry. Thus, one out of every four boys mentions a lack of needed funds within the home as his chief anxiety. Often this is because of the boy's father either being out of work entirely or working only part time. It is rather pathetic to note how deeply some boys are affected by this problem and how anxious they are to lend a helping hand to lighten the burdens of their parents. The reader will recall how in an earlier chapter, when we asked the boy, *Do financial troubles frequently create difficulties in your home?* 42 per cent replied "Yes." Six out of every ten (59.7 per cent) admit that they worry, at least occasionally, because of the scarcity of money in their home, but only one out of four ranks this among the subjects about which he worries the most. In addition, there are an equal number who are equally concerned about other problems in their home, such as fights between their father and mother and the health of various members of their family.

In the majority of these problems the older boys seem to be much more concerned than the younger boys. Thus we find six times as many seniors as freshmen mentioning their future as the subject about which they worry the most. In the matter of social relations, too, we find this same tendency to hold true. But all in all there are only two principal subjects about which the adolescent boy worries most, studies and troublesome conditions at home; 70 per cent of all the subjects about which the students of this investigation said they worried the most fall into one or the other of these two categories.

Worries of Boys and Girls Compared

Both high-school girls and high-school boys rank studies and examinations first among their worries. Boys, however, seem to be more worried about this matter than girls, for roughly only a fifth of the girls mentioned studies as a subject of their serious worries,[6] whereas more than twice as many boys mention the same. Boys, too, seem to be more concerned than girls about problems within the family, such as financial difficulties or parental ill-health. On the other hand, girls appear to worry more seriously about their future than boys, 11 per cent as compared with 8.4 per cent. Both, however, are about equally concerned over girl-friend and boy-friend troubles.

The way in which many of the boys phrased their chief worry throws an interesting side light on the worry itself. For this reason we present some of these comments to the reader.

My biggest worry is that some fellow will step in and take my girl friend away from me.

My mother's health. I wouldn't know what we would do if she is ever taken away from us.

I am always worried about my future and whether I am too dumb to go to college.

How I can find a way of overcoming my self-consciousness.

I worry most about my studies; not that my parents are strict but I want high grades.

Fights between my father and mother. I try to figure out ways of keeping peace in the family.

Whenever my dad or sister is out late I keep on picturing them being mangled in an accident.

Money for clothes and whether there will be enough to pay for next week's bills.

My dad's job and my family's religious welfare.

Trying to keep my girl interested in nobody else but me and holding down my job as forward on the school basketball team.

Family finances, whether mother will be able to make ends meet and whether we will be able to keep our home.

My homework and whether I will flunk or not.

If I'll get a decent girl for a wife and be able to have kids (lots of them).

That my father won't come back to the Church before he dies.

About my father who doesn't receive Holy Communion very often.

How I can help out my father and mother so they will be able to pay my school bills.

Certain sins of impurity, I have an habitual sin on my mind.

Finding a job after I graduate from high school.

About my marks, making a good Confession, and whether I'll be able to resist certain temptations.

My studies and what there is about me that I can't make friends.

My biggest worry is whether my father will bring his money home on pay day or go out and spend it on drink.

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[6] *Sister* Mildred Knoebber, O.S.B., *Self-Revelation of the Adolescent Girl*, 148.

World Conditions — the Future — a Job — Purity

The above comments, as well as the preceding tabular summary, do not give us an idea of the extent of the adolescent's worries, but only an insight into the subjects about which he worries the *most*. In an attempt to sound out the presence of his anxieties in other fields, we asked a series of specific questions relative to certain other possible worries. To our first specific question, *Do you worry about conditions*

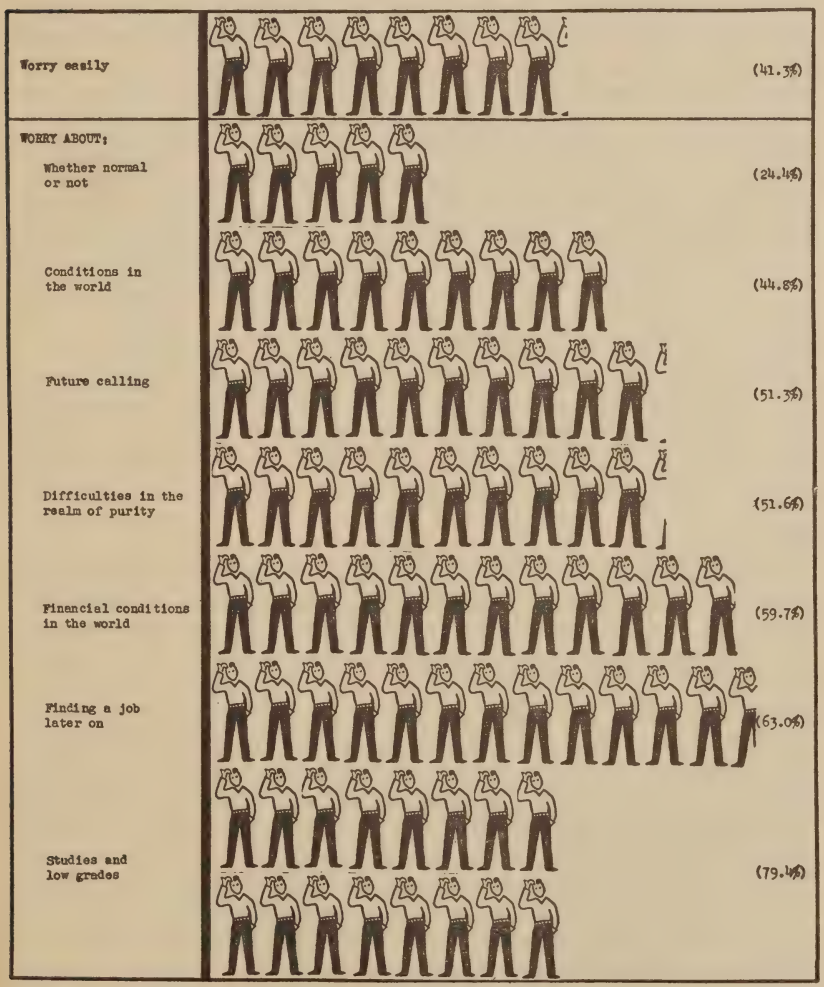

Figure 37. Worry in the adolescent's life. Each symbol represents 5 per cent of the high-school population.

in the world? one out of ten replied "Not at all"; nearly as many (9.2 per cent) "Very much"; over a third (35.6 per cent) "Somewhat," and almost half (44.8 per cent) "Not much, but a little." (See Fig. 37.) It would seem, therefore, that fewer than a tenth of the boys on the high-school level are considerably concerned about conditions in the world. The majority of those who are concerned, either "very much," "somewhat," or "a little," center their anxiety in the two subjects of war and opportunities for work.

Although we noted that less than one tenth of the boys ranked worry over their future as their principal anxiety, there are more than five times that many (51.3 per cent) who say they do worry about not having settled the question of their vocation, but only one out of four (24.1 per cent) says he *frequently* worries about this question; 27.2 per cent say they worry about this matter only occasionally. Then there are more than six out of ten (63 per cent) who worry about not being able to find a job later on, but, again, only about one out of four (26 per cent) finds this a matter of frequent anxiety.

In the realm of studies, too, more boys worry about examinations and low grades than the 45 per cent who listed this matter as their principal worry. As a matter of fact, only one fifth of the boys (20.6 per cent) stated that they never worry over their studies.

Difficulties in the sphere of purity and sex likewise prove to be a source of worry to more than the 7 per cent who listed this as their *main anxiety*. As we pointed out in the preceding chapter,[7] more than half of the boys (51.6 per cent) stated that they worry about difficulties which they have in this field.

Normal or Not

A final question on the subject of adolescent worries takes us right into the most hidden recesses of the adolescent's self. The question, *Have you ever worried about whether you were normal or not?* gives us information which the adolescent is least likely to speak about to others. Yet it is a problem which has a most depressing and disintegrating effect upon him. Somehow the adolescent who has this problem feels ashamed of such thoughts, yet his mind will not leave them alone as long as he has a faint suspicion that he is "different" from other boys his age. Perhaps an imprudent remark on the part of a parent or teacher first suggested this idea to him. His own difficulties in making adjustments, the changes going on within him, and his ever deepening sense of inadequacy render him only too ready to fasten his attention on such an idea. Most dire effects follow; he becomes introverted, morbid, lonely, taunted by sad feelings; in a word, his personality is completely disorganized. The very aloofness

[7] Cf. *supra*, 296–298.

of adolescents thus afflicted renders the recognition and treatment of this problem all the more difficult.

Fortunately only 6.3 per cent of the boys presently in our high schools are frequently worried over this difficulty. For three fourths of them (75.6 per cent) the thought of their being abnormal has never entered their mind at all or only in a passing manner. More than a sixth of the boys (17.4 per cent), however, are occasionally worried over this idea. For these latter, a clear explanation of the reason underlying their current maladjustments would most probably dissolve these thoughts entirely.

Almost infinite are the reactions of uneasiness, worry, and doubt which well up in the adolescent's mind as a result of the many personal, educational, and social adjustments which he is called on to make during this period. We have touched on only some of the more common ones here. We shall now take up the subject of the adolescent's doubts in order to give the reader a fuller appreciation of the unrest lying at the root of much of the insecurity which characterizes the period of adolescence.

The Adolescent's Doubts

Many writers on adolescence have placed considerable emphasis on the presence and influence of doubts in the adolescent's life. Doubts are said to be more common during adolescence than during any other period. It is quite understandable why doubts should crop up during these years, for it is at this time that the intellectual powers are expanding into phases of more independent activity. The adolescent begins to take a delight in judging things according to his own ideas. His increased powers of comprehension make him more aware than ever before of the complexity of things and urge him on to resynthesize his knowledge into a system of truths which will stand the test of criticism. An increased sense of self impels him to test everything which he has hitherto simply accepted, to take nothing for granted, to make his own affirmation the sole criterion of truth.[8]

Ideas which heretofore dwelt side by side in consciousness without any sense of clash now suddenly reveal certain contradictions. Hence, for the first time, truths which he accepted without question as a child now produce uneasiness and mental discomfort. Even the profoundest realities are examined anew. Under the scrutiny of his expanded but untrained mind everything is consciously weighed and criticized, with doubts almost inevitably ensuing, for the bases on which many of his beliefs rest are those which satisfied his limited powers of a few years ago. But now he demands more adequate reasons, and when these are not forthcoming, or when he cannot compre-

[8] Rudolph Allers, *Psychology of Character*, 272.

hend them, doubt and skepticism too often remain to assail his mind and disturb his soul.

But sometimes this feeling of unrest is not exclusively intellectual, either in its origin or in its character. It may be due to a surging up of the emotional nature, a case of the "ferment of the new wine threatening the integrity of the old bottles simply because of the expansion within." Hence, in some instances, it may be this general feeling of emotional restlessness which prompts the adolescent to be skeptical.

Prevalence of Doubts

To the question, *Do you ever have serious doubts about things that you feel are rather important?* six out of every ten boys (60.3 per cent) replied "Yes," giving us a fair indication of the prevalence of the problem of doubt among Catholic boys on the high-school level. One out of every five boys (19.8 per cent) states that he is frequently bothered by doubts of a serious nature, while about a third (35.9 per cent) say they are never troubled by such serious doubts. As usual, a few (3.8 per cent) failed to respond. The incidence of the problem tends to be higher among older boys than among younger boys.

A comparison of our findings with those of Sister Mildred Knoebber[9] indicates that among adolescents, boys seem to be more skeptical than girls; 60 per cent of the boys admit experiencing serious doubts more or less frequently, but only 40 per cent of the girls admit the same.

TABLE 37. Subjects About Which High-School Boys Usually Have Serious Doubts

Rank	*Subject of doubts*	*No. of boys*	*Per cent*
1.	Purity, sex, what is sinful in this matter	256	21.2
2.	Religion, my soul, sins, hell, God, eternity	179	14.8
3.	My future, getting a job, success, education	146	12.1
4.	Vocation, what mine might be	128	10.6
5.	Life in general, life problems, myself, my duties	127	10.5
6.	Girl friends, whether to get married, duties in marriage	125	10.4
7.	School and studies	102	8.4
8.	Relations with parents, home problems, finances	74	6.1
9.	Social relations, dealing with others	54	4.5
10.	Miscellaneous and indefinite	112	9.3

Subjects About Which Boys Are Skeptical

Our next question, *If so, what are the things you usually have doubts about?*, was answered by only the 1206 boys who stated in the previous question that they at least occasionally experienced doubts. Their replies are presented in Table 37.

[9] *Self-Revelation of the Adolescent Girl*, 152.

In analyzing Table 37 we are struck at once by the fact that the top-ranking subjects about which boys most frequently have serious doubts refer directly to religion and morals. More than one out of every five boys (21.8 per cent) is perturbed by matters in this sphere which he fails to understand. Questions relative to the boy's vocation and his future constitute the other principal field into which many of his more serious doubts fall. Nearly one out of seven (13.7 per cent) mentions doubts of this nature.

It is not surprising that uncertainty as to what constitutes a sin of impurity is highest on the list of serious doubts, for in a preceding chapter[10] we found sufficient evidence pointing in this direction. The reader will recall that more than a fourth of the boys were not clear as to what was sinful in regard to purity, and that half of them were doubtful about what was forbidden on a "date," while nearly as many pleaded for clearer rules in the matter of what constituted an impure thought, word, or action.

Nor are we surprised that serious doubts in regard to religion ranked second, for we likewise noted in an earlier chapter that 40 per cent of the boys stated that things which they had heard from others had caused them to question more or less frequently certain facts about their religion. Thus, while many of the adolescent's religious doubts may be due, as we have pointed out, to the fact of the intellectual appetite growing faster than the means of mental digestion, many of his doubts likewise take their rise in the irreligious and intellectually hostile atmosphere in which the boy of today grows up.

Conflict Between Moral Teachings and Popular Ideas

Supporting evidence for the above statement is found in the replies to the question, *Have you ever been puzzled over the disagreement between the teaching of the Church on what is sinful and certain popular ideas?* Forty-four per cent responded with an affirmative answer to this question, while one tenth of the boys (10.3 per cent) said that the disagreement between the morals they had been taught in school and those they see portrayed in their environment has frequently been a source of puzzlement and doubt for them. However, 55 per cent of the boys have never been affected in this way. The remaining 1 per cent made no reply. But of those who have been puzzled over the lack of agreement between the standards taught by the Church and those exemplified in the world, the majority come from the upper classes in high school where it would seem the adolescent most keenly feels the pressure of moral standards.

Some indication of the emotion which is tied up with some of the adolescent's more serious doubts is reflected in the following comments:

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[10] Cf. *supra*, 263–267.

Am I on the right road or not? Sometimes I have doubts about it for the lectures on religion which I get in school don't seem true to life.

I'm in a dither about evolution, eternity, and predestination; it simply gets me down when I try to figure it out.

I cannot understand why there is so much evil in the world today. I frequently have doubts whether there is a God.

I hear so many things and see so much free love, etc., which is just the opposite of what I am taught that I sometimes begin to doubt whether the Catholic Church is right.

There can be little doubt that the environmental immorality to which the adolescent is subjected has a disturbing effect upon his thinking. In many cases the effects are not even recognized by him. We have already presented overwhelming evidence in this regard when we treated his ideas on the morality of petting and necking.

Earlier Versus Later Education

One third of the boys in our study (33.1 per cent) assert that they have encountered discrepancies between certain things that they were taught in grammar school and certain things which they were taught later in high school. Of these students, 42.3 per cent (four out of ten) say that this experience caused doubts. However, this figure represents only 14 per cent of the general high-school boy population. What is the cause of this disagreement between earlier and later learning? In some cases, misinformation may have been dispensed by ill-informed teachers. However, it is more than likely that misinterpretation on the part of the boy is at the bottom of his problem, and this mainly because of his inability to adequately comprehend certain facts at an earlier age.

At this point it may be well to explain that not all doubts are harmful. Some may be a helpful means through which the adolescent learns the value of an open mind. They may even help him convert his unreasoned religious convictions of immaturity into reasoned convictions of maturity. The majority of doubts, however, have a disturbing effect and for this reason it is desirable that the youthful inquirer be encouraged to air his doubts to his mentors, for doubts locked up in secret become toxic and tend to rob the adolescent of that certainty which he so sorely needs.

In the next chapter we shall consider those personality difficulties which result from the adolescent's reactions to these problems of doubt, worry, and discouragement which we have just discussed.

Chapter 17

PERSONALITY DIFFICULTIES, HOPES, AND WISHES

What are the adolescent's personality difficulties? What is his biggest personal problem? What in his innermost heart does he desire and cherish most? These questions, while already touched upon in preceding chapters, will be given more detailed consideration in the pages that follow.

Moodiness in the Adolescent

To what extent do conflicts with reality and consequent doubts and worries cause the adolescent to become introverted or moody? Our first question, put with the purpose of obtaining this information, read: *Do you ever get into moods when you can't seem to cheer up to save yourself?* To this query, three out of every four boys (75.1 per cent) replied "Yes." Only one out of four (24.9 per cent) answered "No." This is a good example of the mercurial character of the adolescent. One day he may be riding the crest of a wave of joy and the next be down in the trough of gloom. The fact that three fourths of the boys admit that they experience moods from which they seem unable to extricate themselves is not surprising in view of the insecurity which adolescents feel within themselves. Their lack of balance resulting from rapid physical and mental changes makes them self-conscious. And this self-consciousness, together with their almost abnormal longing for social approval and their desire to achieve (despite the fact that adolescents are fearfully distrustful of their own ability), focuses their attention on themselves in an unhealthy way. They become introspective, fall into habits of studying their own failures, dissect their own motives, and as a result are impressed with a sense of their own inadequacy. The emotional accompaniment to this extravagant solicitude about self is the mood which takes hold of them.

One out of every five boys (19.4 per cent) experiences attacks of moodiness frequently. The others (55.7 per cent) are subject to these moods just occasionally, when they cannot seem to cheer up regardless of what they do.

Self-conscious About Faults

One of the causes of attacks of moodiness is an oversolicitousness about one's faults. To sound out the extent of this problem among normal adolescents, we asked the question, *Do you feel so conscious*

of your faults that you can't enjoy anything? Nearly half of the boys (48.1 per cent) replied "Yes," but only one out of ten (11.1 per cent) said that this experience was an ever present problem with him. Slightly over half (51.2 per cent) stated that they were not bothered by this difficulty at all, while the usual few (.1 per cent) gave no reply. That nearly half of the boys are so conscious of their faults that their anxiety about these mars their opportunities for enjoyment is explained again by the adolescent ever being on the search for a reassuring position that is not yet clearly defined. Every failure tends to make him more aware that he is still far away from the personal value which he longs to possess.

Periods of Sadness

Such an overconsciousness of faults is part of the vicious circle of feeling inadequate in life situations and is bound to result in periods of depression. Our question, *Do you ever feel sad and depressed or "down in the mouth"?* brought forth a positive response from practically every boy, though the frequency with which these feelings of sadness are experienced varies considerably. Only one boy out of seven (14.5 per cent) says that he is frequently depressed. Somewhat more than one out of three (36 per cent) says that he is depressed only now and then. About half of the boys (49.5 per cent) are somewhere in between, experiencing the problem of sad feelings more or less frequently. The question that naturally comes to mind at this point is: "What causes these feelings in the adolescent?"

Causes of Low Spirits

More than one fifth of the students (22.6 per cent) were unable to explain the causes of their low spirits. A number of these reply, "I don't know, but I wish I knew." It was plainly too difficult a problem of introspection for a number of them. Others give what they feel is the cause of their periods of sadness but practically all fail to grasp the underlying reason — their own instability.

Glancing over Table 38, we note that one out of every seven boys feels that his school difficulties are the cause of his depressive experiences, while one out of ten lays the blame at the door of difficulties in the home. Disappointments, deprivations, and a guilty conscience are likewise near the top of the list of causes as the boy sees them.

It would seem that the causes which are liable to foment periods of depression in girls differ considerably on certain points from the causes that prompt the same reaction in boys. For example, girls (13.4 per cent) list boy-friend troubles as the principal cause of their sad feelings,[1] whereas girl-friend troubles are listed only tenth by the boys (3.2 per cent). Both, however, are practically identical in the

[1] *Sister* Mildred Knoebber, *op. cit.*, 145.

TABLE 38. Alleged Causes for Feelings of Sadness and Depression According to 2000 High-School Boys

Rank	*Cause*	*No. of boys*	*Per cent*
1.	Difficulties in studies and school, low marks, failure	298	14.9
2.	Troubles in the home, arguments, debts, parental attitude	192	9.6
3.	Disappointments, things go wrong	179	9.0
4.	Sins, sex, self-abuse, guilty conscience, mistakes, wrong conduct	163	8.2
5.	Deprivations, lack of social opportunities, curtailment of liberties	106	5.3
6.	Sickness, death, mishap	103	5.2
7.	Hurt feelings: because of a remark or because I have hurt those of others	102	5.1
8.	Misunderstandings, quarrels with friends	102	5.1
9.	Personality difficulties, inferiority complex, personal defects, lack of ability	80	4.0
10.	Girl-friend troubles	65	3.2
11.	Lack of social technique, lack of friends	58	2.9
12.	Miscellaneous: nothing to do; worries, fears, discouragement; my work and my future; lack of sleep; reaction after a "wild time"; the weather; things I heard or read; antagonisms; etc.	117	5.8
13.	No answer, or the statement, "I don't know"	451	22.6

number who name disappointments and hurt feelings as causes of depression; but sin or wrongdoing is mentioned as a cause of depression by twice as many boys as girls.

The following is a sampling of the boy's own explanations as to why he experiences attacks of sadness:

I have periods of depression after I have had arguments with my parents or friends. I am too sensitive and worry over trivial remarks.

The realization that my mother is gone forever and I have nobody but my father to fight for in life.

Every time I give way to a bad personal habit which I acquired unknowingly.

Teachers giving me hell and telling me I'm dumb.

Lack of good friends and no decent boy to go out with.

After I've done something wrong or sinned impurely I feel awful sad and depressed.

Disappointment with something I have worked hard to get.

A bad day at school, or low grades.

Failure to get something that I've tried hard for.

My poor character, lack of courage in meeting strangers and failure to control myself.

Being afraid that somebody is going to swipe my girl or when she talks indifferently to me I get down in the dumps thinking she is two timing on me.

The fact that there is nothing for me to enjoy in life but impure things.

Sins, saying something mean to my parents, or hurting anyone's feelings.

Thoughts about my stupidity in school and lack of talents in sports.

I would rather not say — certain things I don't know how to mention.

A frequent fear that I am not getting anywhere in life.

The disgust of seeing my dad come home drunk and hurting my mother by his actions.

Lack of Self-confidence

Another problem which nearly one out of every four boys (22.7 per cent) has to battle within the realm of his own self is the feeling of a lack of self-confidence. Less than two thirds (65.3 per cent) say that they are not bothered by this difficulty, while somewhat more than a tenth (12 per cent) are uncertain about themselves.

A study of age trends in our findings on this point reveals a tendency for the older boys to have less confidence in themselves than have the younger boys.

Self Compared With the Average

In reply to a further query on the subject of self-confidence, *Do you feel you have more self-confidence than that of a good many people?* more than four out of ten (41.8 per cent) say "No," nearly half (47.2 per cent) say "Yes," a few (.3 per cent) say nothing, and a little over one tenth (10.7 per cent) say that they are uncertain.

Comparing our replies to the last two questions, we see that nearly half of the boys (47 per cent) feel they have more self-confidence than the average person; about one fourth (23 per cent) feel they lack self-confidence; and the others (30 per cent) either feel they have about as much confidence in their own ability as the average person or are doubtful in this matter.

When we consider that confidence in self is one of the essential requirements for achievement in any field and particularly in the matter of making personal adjustments, we see what a disadvantage those adolescents are laboring under who do not possess this characteristic. And furthermore, how keenly is the lack of self-confidence felt by the diffident adolescent in his attempts at solving his own difficulties! He finds it difficult to attempt readjustments; the fear of what others might say weighs him down; memories of past successes which might prompt initiative are lacking. But even if he does make a start, the chances are that his determination will not be vigorous, for he lacks the independence of spirit which springs from self-confidence. Unless many of those who are uncertain of themselves receive encouragement from others — and here again we see the necessity of a guidance counselor — they may never experience a return of self-confidence.

Lack of Will Power

The returns on our question, *Do you feel as though you don't have much backbone of your own?* indicate that more than four out of every ten high-school boys (42.6 per cent) feel that they lack will power. This is particularly true of the older boys. However, 57.2 per cent reply "No" to this question. The picture is not quite so dark,

however, for only one out of ten (9.8 per cent) says that he frequently feels this lack of "backbone." Nearly a third (32.8 per cent) only occasionally have this experience. A few took the trouble to add, "That's the trouble, if I only had more backbone I could go places with myself," or "I haven't got what it takes, that's all, I keep on slipping back."

Judging from their other remarks throughout the problemmaire, and particularly their comments when stating their problems in the realm of purity, it would seem that the lack of will power is felt most keenly in the matter of refraining from improper entertainment and in regard to personal purity. Quite a few cannot understand why it is they are so weak in this matter. Their own weakness is a puzzle to themselves.

When it comes to understanding himself, many a boy is puzzled on specific points in his own conduct, or about strange changes and feelings that come over himself; but when he is asked to take his whole self into consideration, he is hesitant to say that he does not understand himself. We find that less than one out of ten boys (8.8 per cent), in replying to a question on this matter, says that he does not understand himself. About one out of twenty (4.7 per cent) is uncertain, but 86.5 per cent affirm that they do understand themselves, at least fairly well. In other words, despite problems and puzzling feelings and a conviction that others, especially older people, do not understand him, the adolescent feels he does understand himself. That this is only his own opinion is quite evident. That he actually does not have an adequate understanding of himself is likewise quite evident, for we have produced ample evidence indicating that it is precisely his failure to grasp the reasons for many of his own difficulties — many of which reasons lie within himself — that lies at the root of many of the problems about which he complains.

What the Adolescent Thinks About His Future

The next several questions which we take up for brief analysis give us an insight into the boy's inward thoughts and reactions relative to his future. How does he most frequently feel about his future, hopeful or discouraged? Does he worry about being able to find a job later on? Does he fear the responsibilities that await him? Has he decided on his lifework?

Fear of Coming Responsibilities

As we noted in the preceding chapter, fully one third of the boys (33.9 per cent) state definitely that they fear the responsibilities that will be theirs within the next few years. From interviews which the writer had with many of the subjects of this study as well as from a study of the problemmaires of these students, it would seem that in many cases this fear of responsibility is traceable to oversolicitous

parents and teachers who, in shielding these boys from graded experiences in the performance of responsible tasks, have developed and prolonged their feeling of dependence and have thus robbed them of exercise in showing initiative and sharing responsibility which is so necessary for the development of leadership. For this reason, these boys are both unaware of the thrill of accomplishment that comes from responsibilities well borne as well as unaccustomed to making their own decisions; hence, it is quite natural that they should be fearful of the day when they will have to take over the duties that fall to the mature man.

Anxiety Over Finding a Job

Our next question, *Do you worry much about being able to find a job later on?* brought a positive response from nearly two out of every three boys (63 per cent). But only one out of every four (26 per cent) worries frequently about this question. Therefore, more than half of those who worry about being able to find a job later on do so only occasionally. Some are deeply concerned over this matter, as, for example, the boy who says, "My big worry is how to get a job after I finish school so that I can help my mother so she won't have to go out scrubbing any more." But one third of the boys (33.4 per cent) say that it is only rarely that they worry over this problem. A few more than usual (3.6 per cent) offer no reply.

It is not surprising that the majority of boys should be seriously anxious over the possibility of their future employment, for they cannot help being impressed by the failure of their own acquaintances to obtain work. Some are quite pessimistic about their future, for example, one senior complains, "What is there in our future if we are not able to get a good job? Our home is gone. The family has been split up because of bills and poverty. And if I don't marry, what is there in life for me?" Another asks, "Why should I slave away in school when all I'll get when I get out is dole on relief or starvation employment on the WPA or in the CCC?" Others say that they are going to make sure of having future work by preparing themselves for one of the professions, but here again many may be doomed to disappointment; for, according to Professor Harold Clark of Columbia University, only one fourth of those who left school in 1937 to go into the professions succeeded in gaining an entry.

General Attitude Toward the Future

The reader may ask, "What is the general attitude of the high-school boy toward his future?" To obtain this information, we asked the boy to describe in a word how he *most frequently* feels about his future. The following are the results: nearly four out of ten (38.1 per cent) say they are hopeful; three out of ten (31.1 per cent) say they are enthusiastic; more than one out of ten (11.4 per cent)

says he is worried; one out of ten (9.7 per cent) is doubtful; one out of twenty (4.5 per cent) is indifferent; 3.3 per cent are discouraged; 1.3 per cent are resigned; and .6 per cent are disgusted. Telescoping our findings still further, we may say that seven out of ten are hopeful or enthusiastic about their future, while one out of every four is either worried, doubtful, discouraged, or disgusted with what the future apparently holds for him. And about one in twenty (5.8 per cent) is rather unconcerned, either indifferent or resigned.

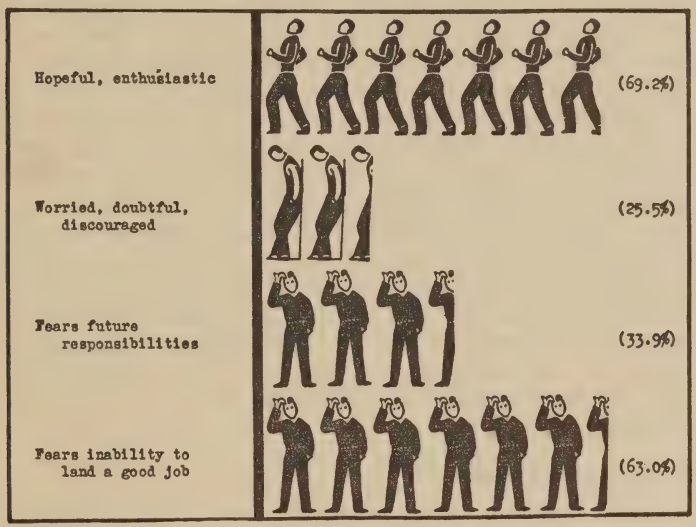

Figure 38. How the adolescent feels about his future. Each symbol represents the attitude of 10 per cent of the high-school population.

To what extent is this general optimism of the boy relative to his future the result of settled plans in the matter of his vocation? According to our findings on this point already quoted in an earlier chapter,[2] it would seem that certainly not more than a small proportion derive their optimism from the feeling of security that might issue from having decided on one's lifework. Only 24 per cent say they have settled this problem for themselves. But this does not mean that those who are undecided on this question are unconcerned about it. The contrary is true, for more than three fourths of these (76.5 per cent) say that they worry over this matter, and for 36 per cent of them it is a problem which causes them frequent worry.

In Figure 38 we summarize in graphic form the adolescent's attitude toward his future.

[2] Cf. *supra*, 95–96.

Problems and Personal Counsel

The question of vocation brings up the problem of personal guidance. As we pointed out previously, 40 per cent of the boys admit that the school has helped them either in deciding or in working toward a decision in the matter of their vocation. But a larger number (46.5 per cent) are quite definite in stating the opposite. Fortunately, quite a few of the latter have sought guidance in the matter of vocational choice from others, for 64 per cent of the boys admit having sought such advice from parents, teachers, priest, boy friends, and others.[3]

But vocational choice is not the only problem which calls for guidance. In many another personal problem the adolescent feels even more keenly the need of someone in whom he can confide, someone to whom he can go to pour out his innermost troubles and from whom he can receive that sympathy and help which will send him away with mind clear and joy in his heart. We noted earlier[4] that only slightly more than a third of the boys (36.7 per cent) stated that they had the opportunity to speak to their teachers about their personal problems, and further that half of these (49 per cent) failed, for some reason or another, to make use of the opportunity. This means that only two out of ten actually consult their teacher on personal problems; but even here, in nearly every case the consultation is confined to vocational matters. How many of the other 80 per cent and more are battling their own difficulties without the helpful hand of a confidant?

Help From Confidants

The replies to the question, *Have you someone with whom you can talk over your intimate problems confidentially?* show that 68.8 per cent have someone in whom they do or think they could confide. But more than a fourth of the boys (26.4 per cent) say that they have no one to whom they might go for help in their intimate difficulties. A few (4.4 per cent) were uncertain, largely because they had not as yet felt the need of such help, and several (.4 per cent) made no reply.

The returns on our next two questions are rather interesting. Those who stated that they had a confidant were asked to indicate whether or not they had ever consulted this person. If they had not, they were asked to give an explanation.

The replies to our first query strike an optimistic note, for nearly nine out of ten (86.4 per cent) of those who have a trusted friend say that they have consulted him. And over half of these (46 per cent) say that they have done so frequently; the others (40.4 per cent) say "only occasionally." In the general high-school population this means

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[3] Cf. *supra*, 101. [4] Cf. *supra*, 102.

that six out of every ten boys (59.5 per cent) have at one time or the other, and some quite frequently, talked over their personal problems with one who enjoys their confidence. However, almost one eighth (12.1 per cent) of those who feel that they have someone whom they could consult have never gone to him with their intimate problems. Why not? Nearly a third (30 per cent) of these 12 per cent say that they do not think it is necessary, that their problems are not that serious; 16 per cent say that they lack the courage, are shy, self-conscious, or would feel embarrassed in speaking about their intimate difficulties, while just as many say that they prefer to keep their problems to themselves; 14 per cent feel that the person would not understand their problems, that they do not have any confidence in his being able to help them; about one out of ten (11 per cent) feels he can handle his own while an equal number say they "don't find the time" or explain that their friend is too busy. Others are afraid that what they would have to say would shock others or cause them to think less of them. Some of their own comments on this question shed further light on the matter:

> I don't go to him because I don't think he would understand, he would get the wrong impression and think I was worse than I am, or he might think I am working up for a touch.
>
> Not sure he would take it in the right way. He would probably think I was foolish.
>
> I'm inclined to be noncommunicable.
>
> Because I think I would be ignored.
>
> I can never warm up to the person, always lose courage.
>
> I feel that I would be laughed at or punished.
>
> Oh, no! I would much prefer to keep those things to myself.

Evidently some of these withhold their confidence because they fear that by giving expression to their inmost difficulties they may reveal their total worthlessness.[5] Their constant, growing doubt about their own worth prompts aloofness and reserve lest they be told outright that they are hopeless. For this reason the adolescents who are likely to need guidance most are the most likely to resist any attempt to save their threatened sense of self-esteem.

Sources of Intimate Counsel

A check question in this matter read, *To whom do you most frequently go to get advice and talk over things that concern you intimately?* The information sought through this question is slightly different, however, for those with whom boys talk over things that concern them intimately may not be in a position to offer guidance. The answers to the present question check closely with the answers to the preceding questions. Above we found that six out of ten actually consulted their confidant. In the replies to our present question,

[5] Rudolph Allers, *Psychology of Character*, 118.

we find that among the various persons to whom boys go for an intimate chat, 63 per cent can be regarded as trusted confidants.

Broken down into identifiable percentages, we find that over half of the boys (58.5 per cent) go to their parents when they want personal advice; 17 per cent simply mention "parents," but nearly one out of every six (15.7 per cent) says he most frequently goes to his father when he wants help on intimate problems while more than one out of four (25.8 per cent) names his mother as his confidante in these matters.

Next to parents come boy friends among those to whom the adolescent most frequently goes when he wants to talk over things that concern him intimately. Exactly one out of eight names "fellows my age" as the source of his guidance. The priest comes third with 12 per cent naming him as their most frequent consultant; in the fourth place come the boy's own brothers, consulted by 6.7 per cent; teachers next, mentioned by 2.6 per cent; his sisters next, mentioned by 2.5 per cent; and girl friends last, consulted most frequently by only 1.1 per cent. Then there are 4.7 per cent who mention other persons such as relatives, workmen, older people. Four and three tenths per cent of the boys say that they consult God in prayer, or as one sophomore put it, "I simply pray and tell the Blessed Virgin about the things that bother me."

The Boy and His Ideals

Another source from which the adolescent may derive much help in the solution of his problems as well as in the unification of his personality is found in the realm of the subjective, in the ideals which he has set up within himself to guide, nerve, and inspire. A vibrant, live, well-loved image of personified excellence ever before the adolescent's mind will go far toward filling the void which he feels within because of his own inadequacy, and at the same time provide definite guiding lines for his own conduct.

Idealization Leads to Realization

The adolescent is characteristically a hero worshiper and a pursuer of ideals. Generally he looks for someone whom he can look up to, someone whom he can admire, imitate, and follow. Perhaps at no other time is he so intensely stimulated by personalities. His heart hungers for communion with those whom he regards worthy of his admiration and service. As G. Stanley Hall puts it, "Every youth is always profoundly influenced by someone a little older, and is more or less plastic to his or her will.[6] To the adolescent, the person whom he admires as his ideal becomes the source of soul-filling emotions and of stirrings of strength and encouragement. The thought of his

[6] *Adolescence*, II, 107.

ideal carries with it a desire to achieve and furnishes the motives to transform this desire into action. It lifts him up when his spirit bogs, and bolsters his vacillating conduct, thus making for steadiness of progress and consistency of aim.

But just the opposite may result. Ideals may prove morbidly depressing if ill chosen or too nebulous and ethereal. Allers warns of one of the dangers in this regard when he says, "It is at the least imprudent to set before a child too early in life a definite, clear-cut ideal figure which he is encouraged to imitate and emulate; there is too grave a danger of forcing his life into channels for which it is not created."[7]

We grasp the importance of an ideal in the life of a boy when we realize that what he looks up to and admires in his ideal tends to shape his own thoughts and conduct to the pattern of those observed in his ideal. By a psychological law admiration begets love, and love inspires imitation. Moore points out that "the eternal ideal of what one aims at has a psychological tendency to be transformed into the more or less subconscious idea of what one is by the alchemy of wish fulfillment."[8] In other words, the ideal which one conceives of oneself carries with it the tendency toward its own realization. Hence, the care that must be exercised in holding up ideals before young people.

Percentage Who Have an Ideal

We mentioned above the general tendency of adolescents to organize their life about an ideal; but do all the boys of high-school age have an ideal? According to the replies to a question on this matter, one out of every three boys (33.4 per cent) does not, whereas six out of ten (60.8 per cent) do, leaving about one out of twenty (5.8 per cent) uncertain. The number of younger boys who say that they have an ideal tends to be greater than the number of older boys who say that they have an ideal.

Those who stated that they had no ideal were asked, *If not, are you much concerned about not having one?* To this only one out of ten (9.7 per cent) replied "Yes." All the others who were concerned with this question, with the exception of a small number who were uncertain (7.2 per cent), replied "No" (83.1 per cent). This means that only 3.8 per cent of the boys in our high schools have the problem of being concerned about not having an ideal. Three out of ten do not have an ideal and are not concerned about it.

The Boys' Heroes

Our next question was directed only to the 1216 of the boys who said they had an ideal. It read, *Who is your ideal or hero?* In replying to this query, by far the majority mentioned some specific individual

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[7] *Psychology of Character*, 177.

[8] T. V. Moore, O.S.B., *Dynamic Psychology*, 176.

by name. Only one out of ten gave somewhat of an indication of having an abstract ideal. The latter were sometimes rather vague, saying "Anyone who is a great lawyer," "People who are famous and popular and have a lot of money," or "Any man who is pure and honest and devoted to his family."

In presenting our findings on the adolescent boy's ideal in Table 39, we have classified his replies according to the category into which the person he mentions seemed to fit. According to this classification, we note that roughly one out of every four boys makes specific mention of some religious or Catholic person as his ideal; this includes only those who mention Christ, the saints, a priest, a Brother, or a Catholic layman. It is evident that the ideals of many others are religious personages but specific mention is not made of the fact.

Those who have an ideal which definitely emphasizes things worldly, such as popularity, riches, power — excluding those who mention an athlete as their ideal — rank only one out of ten. No doubt this ratio should be larger, for it is quite obvious that some who have an athlete as their ideal are primarily attracted by the popularity which he enjoys.

Characteristically enough, the heroes of sports top the list of those whom the adolescent most admires. Some specific hero of the gridiron or diamond is the ideal of almost one out of every five boys. In 21 per cent of the cases the names represent players whose feats have been played up on the sport pages of the nation. Included likewise in this classification are the 3 per cent who mention such football coaches as Elmer Layden and the late Knute Rockne as their ideals.

Fathers would thrill with pride if they could peer into the hearts of their sons and see the admiration and esteem in which 10.9 per cent of the boys hold their father. Filial affection and respect shine forth in the remarks of almost all these boys as they go on to praise the patience, devotedness, and manliness of their father. Our findings on this point are in substantial agreement with those of Sister Mary Inez Phelan, O.S.F.,[9] who found that 5 per cent of the high-school boys of her study mentioned their parents as their ideal. It would seem that boys differ considerably from girls in this matter, for according to her data nearly one fifth of the girls (18.5 per cent) had chosen one of their parents as their ideal.

It is regrettable that Christ ranks only third among the adolescent's ideals, for if any character can satisfy the teen-age boy's passion for personality it is the Master Personality, Christ. The fact that He is not chosen by a larger number as their ideal is a sad commentary on the manner in which He has been presented to our adolescents. In no other person does service and sacrifice tower to such heroic heights.

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[9] *An Empirical Study of the Ideals of Adolescent Boys and Girls* (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America, 1936), 34.

TABLE 39. Persons Mentioned by 1216 High-School Boys in Naming Their Ideal or Hero

Rank	*Ideal or hero*	*No. of boys*	*Per cent*
1.	A certain athlete ("Gabby" Hartnett, "Dizzy" Dean, "Whizzer" White, etc.)	340	27.9
2.	My father	134	10.9
3.	Jesus Christ	82	6.6
4.	Anyone who is an honest, pure, hard-working man; a Catholic lay leader	80	6.6
5.	A certain boy friend	79	6.5
6.	A certain saint (SS. Joseph, Anthony, Aloysius, etc.)	76	6.2
7.	A certain priest (one of the assistants, Father Coughlin, etc.)	74	6.0
8.	Anyone who is a great engineer, doctor, lawyer, scientist, etc.	74	6.0
9.	A certain current political or world figure (President Roosevelt, etc.)	54	4.4
10.	My uncle, cousin, etc.	53	4.3
11.	Anyone who is popular, famous, and wealthy	45	3.7
12.	A certain movie actor (Mickey Rooney, Spencer Tracy, etc.)	45	3.7
13.	A certain historical character (Lincoln, "Teddy" Roosevelt, etc.)	42	3.4
14.	A certain aviator or war ace (Lindbergh, Corrigan, etc.)	34	2.0
15.	My big brother	32	1.9
16.	A certain Brother, a teacher	31	1.8
17.	My mother	24	1.4
18.	Others: a friend of mine, certain orchestra leader, characters in fiction, a girl I know, Blessed Virgin, indefinite	78	6.5

In Him spiritual heroism finds its supreme example. Because the adolescent readily catches the fire of the spiritually heroic, the task of the teacher is not so much to convince him of the truth of certain abstract propositions about Christ as it is to hold up before him Christ as dynamic, heroic — as worthy of the highest devotion and most complete service that can be rendered. In this matter the teacher must ever bear in mind that the adolescent loves a challenge and wants to do things that are hard.

Boy friends who are mentioned as ideals are usually chosen because of their athletic and intellectual abilities and because of their friendliness. When a saint is mentioned it is usually, though not always, the boy's patron saint. Those who mention political or historical figures usually admire them for the power and domination they are able to exercise over others. Rather striking in our data is the low percentage who mention a movie favorite as their ideal. Perhaps girls are more frequently influenced in this regard than boys.

From an analysis of our findings it is quite evident that in the mind of many an adolescent the hero element took preference over

that of the ideal. For many, but not for all, the concept of an ideal is hardly that of "some type of excellence which we imagine as possible or desirable and which we aspire to realize in our life."[10] It is rather that of some thrilling hero whom they admire and only in a vague way strive to imitate.

Age Trends in Ideals

Ideals in which the religious element is dominant tend to be mentioned more frequently by the older boys than they are mentioned by the younger boys. A single exception to this trend is the number who mention a priest as their ideal, in which case the number of freshmen is twice as large as the number of seniors. There is a decided tendency for the number who mention a sport's hero as their ideal to decrease regularly as age increases; only half as many seniors as freshmen select an athlete as their ideal. No significant trend is evident, however, in the number who name their father as their ideal.

As we have frequently mentioned, by condensing the individual's replies into a summary table, much of the side-light information which the boy includes in his response is lost. Some of this may be recaptured by reading through the following random selection of individual replies relative to the question, *Who is your ideal or hero?*

My ideal is "Whizzer" White, flashy, speedy, brainy, and a real man.

No one in particular but to be able to live according to the standards of the University of Notre Dame and the example of its men.

I would like to be like my father because he has the kindness of a saint and really works to get somewhere.

I try to imitate my patron saint but find it impossible.

My big brother. He's captain of the college football team. Maybe you've heard of him.

My hero is Jesus Christ, the greatest hero of them all.

My patron saint, St. Edward, and my dad.

A classmate of mine who is good in everything, a good athlete, a great sport, and a fine friend.

A big politician who can hold his own against anybody.

Jesus Christ and that football star Sid Luckman.

My uncle. He is a great man with common sense and well educated.

My ideal is to really some day become a pure man and be honest and respected by all.

Father Coughlin or any other truthful leader with nerve and brains.

I want to be well liked, athletic, happy, and, most of all, a martyr — a saint. I would like to be called to fight for Christ with a gun.

I would like to be like Bing Crosby, a singer, actor, father, good Catholic.

The Adolescent's Innermost Desires

We gain a deeper insight into the qualities which adolescents admire and we catch a glimpse of the evaluations which they have learned

[10] Ernest R. Hull, S.J., *The Formation of Character* (St. Louis: B. Herder Co., 1929), 12.

to make when we consider their wishes. These seem to indicate better than many a direct question what they appreciate, what lies nearest their heart. Those things which they want most are the things which hold the center of their attention and hence tend to be expressed in their wishes. These expressions of what they cherish and desire above all else likewise give us an indication of what values have been implanted in their minds and how the forces in the modern world have affected their manner of interpreting these values.

Three Little Wishes

In approaching the adolescent on this matter of his innermost desires we asked him, *If you could have three wishes granted, what would you ask for?* This question proved quite thought provoking for many a boy, for some even stated that it was more difficult to answer than it at first seemed, while others indicate by erasures, cross outs, and rewordings the seriousness with which they considered the question.

Most varied were the responses, running the gamut of desires from "heaven for myself, for the rest of the family, and for everybody in the world" down to a selfish desire for a forbidden pleasure. Most detailed, too, were many of the wishes, as, for example, the wish of the senior who desires "a blonde with blue eyes, 18 years old, 5 feet 3 inches tall, 105 pounds; a lifetime of married happiness; and 5 children, 3 boys and 2 girls."

In some instances the wishes seem to indicate the boy's problems or what he feels he lacks most. Such seems to be the case with many who wish for a more attractive personality, a better physique, more self-control, and with those who wish for more intelligence, money to pay debts, a girl friend, and to be understood by parents. One's heart goes out to the sophomore who wishes for "a better home for dad and mother, a job so I can help mother get a washer so she won't have to work so hard, and that I will be successful so as to make my parents proud of me."

Four Out of Ten Desire the Spiritual

In Table 40, in which we have summarized the more than 5000 wishes of the adolescents of our study, we note that four out of ten definitely state a desire for some spiritual or religious good, such as heaven, a happy death, purity, a stronger faith, grace to lead a good Catholic life. Practically the same number gave vent to their idealism and wish for personal improvement, spiritual strength, and a good education. We note, too, how nearly one third of them express a desire for security, such as will come from a certainty of one's vocation, a good steady job, and a happy married life. Only a small minority of these, however, confine their wishes to desires on this rather elevated plane; the majority express in addition a desire for some more material good of a temporary nature, such as money, a

TABLE 40. Innermost Desires of 2000 Catholic High-School Boys as Expressed in Their Wishes

Rank	*Wish*	*No. of boys*	*Per cent*
1.	Money:	744	37.2
	Unclassified	*289*	*14.4*
	To obtain necessities, to pay bills, etc.	*223*	*11.2*
	To obtain luxuries, "riches"	*140*	*7.0*
	"Spending money"	*92*	*4.6*
2.	Material possessions for pleasure:	690	34.5
	A car, a sport roadster	*427*	*21.3*
	Sports equipment, "bike," airplane, rifle, motorboat, etc.	*263*	*13.2*
3.	Lasting happiness, save my soul, happy death, heaven for self and rest of family	538	26.9
4.	A good steady job that will give me security and a good start in life	350	17.5
5.	A girl friend:	348	17.4
	A good-looking girl, a certain desired girl, a girl who would be my friend	*215*	*10.8*
	A good, pure, Catholic girl (specified)	*133*	*6.6*
6.	Success:	331	16.6
	In future career	*171*	*8.6*
	In studies, high grades, pass examinations	*160*	*8.0*
7.	Personal improvement:	310	15.5
	More intelligence, knowledge, wisdom	*126*	*6.3*
	A better "build," better looks	*106*	*5.3*
	Better personality, social techniques	*78*	*3.9*
8.	Spiritual strength:	309	15.5
	Stronger faith, holiness, to be a saint	*112*	*5.6*
	Purity, self-control, no impure thoughts	*106*	*5.3*
	That I will lead a good Catholic life	*91*	*4.6*
9.	A good education, a college education	232	11.6
10.	Athletic achievement, skill in sports, make the team	225	11.3
11.	Improved conditions in our home, parental understanding, a "nice" home	205	10.3
12.	A good wife, a happy married life	202	10.1
13.	To have perfect health always, a long life	198	9.9
14.	Happiness, health, security, success for parents and other members of the family	197	9.8
15.	To know for certain my vocation, a particular vocation	180	9.0
16.	More friends, more social events and dances, more freedom and leisure time	156	7.8
17.	Fame, popularity, social prestige	83	4.1
18.	Miscellaneous: clothes and other necessities, travel, certain desired permissions (e.g., smoking), peace in the world, through with school, sex experience, peace of mind, books, luck, etc.	239	11.9
19.	No answer	42	2.1

car, a date with a certain girl, or athletic skill. But a sufficiently large number of wishes refer to the more worth-while objectives in life and thus show that underneath the lighthearted, gay frivolity and seeming thoughtlessness of the adolescent boy lie fundamental goodness and a refreshing wholesomeness.

Over half of the boys center one of their three wishes in their life which lies ahead. Not only do they wish to know their vocation, and to obtain a job, an education, and a good wife, but they also include a wish for success in their future career and good health so as to be able to enjoy it.

Luxuries and Necessities

Nearly six out of ten include among their wishes a desire to satisfy some need that is felt more or less keenly at the present time. Such, whose objectives are temporal, but nevertheless worth while, wish for money to pay family debts, for improved home conditions, success in their studies, a sympathetic girl friend, and ability to overcome certain personal defects.

On the other hand, over half of the boys, alongside of these praiseworthy desires, include a wish for temporary things, some of which are more or less frivolous. Thus they wish for luxuries, fabulous wealth, fame, athletic prowess, a sport roadster, a motorboat, an airplane. We note how the desire to own and drive a car is uppermost in the mind of the boy: one out of every five mentions it among his wishes.

In one sense our data show that boys are dominantly material minded, but on closer study we observe that much of their concern over temporalities and material goods refers to those things which are a more or less necessary part of life. Nearly one out of every five boys expresses a wish for something of a social nature; but girl friends and social events are necessary if the boy is to become properly adjusted socially. They desire money (excluding the 7 per cent who desire luxuries) but bills must be paid and spending money is certainly not objectionable. They wish for a job and success in their undertaking, and these likewise are laudable desires.

Developmental Trends Present in Wishes

In analyzing our data for age trends there appears a striking tendency for the number of wishes for material possessions to decline with age. This trend is in perfect agreement with the findings of Washburne, who, in his study of adolescent wishes, found the same to be true.[11] For example, in our study the number of freshmen who express a desire for sports equipment, bicycle, rifle, etc., is seven times larger than the number of seniors who express the same desire. The regularity with which this desire decreases in the adolescent is shown

[11] John N. Washburne, "The Impulsions of Adolescents as Revealed by Their Written Wishes," *Journal of Juvenile Research*, 16 (1932), 193–212.

in the following summary figures of those who expressed a wish for such material possessions as sports equipment, bicycle, etc.: freshmen, 26 per cent; sophomores, 16 per cent; juniors, 7 per cent; and seniors, 4 per cent. The single exception to this trend is the practically stable number (21 per cent) on all levels that desire a car.

A similar trend, though less decided, is found in the number of those who wish for athletic ability. The 14 per cent who express this desire among freshmen decreases to 8 per cent among seniors.

The opposite trend is quite pronounced and regular in the number of those who express a desire for a steady job, future success, a good education, health, a girl friend, a happy married life, purity, and an increase of faith. By steady degrees the 11 per cent among the freshmen who wish for a job increases to 21 per cent among the seniors, while the number of the latter who express a wish for success in their future career is twice as great as it is among the former. On this point likewise our findings are in perfect accord with Washburne's.[12]

A desire for a college education was expressed by 15 per cent of the seniors but by only 9 per cent of the freshmen. Scarcely 13 per cent of the first-year boys express a desire for a girl friend and only 7 per cent for a good wife and a happy marriage; but 21 per cent of the seniors express a desire for a girl friend and 17 per cent, for a good wife and a happy marriage. The number wishing for health likewise increases from 6 per cent among freshmen to 11 per cent among seniors. The number who felt impelled to wish for more will power and a lessening of impure thoughts together with a desire for holiness increased from 8 per cent among the freshmen to 14 per cent among the seniors. This is in accord with our findings above relative to the boy's ideals in which we found the seniors to have spiritual ideals more frequently than the freshmen.

Many implications could be drawn from these manifestations of developmental trends, but such an expansion upon our data would take us too far afield.

Desires of Boys and Girls Compared

In comparing the wishes of both sexes among adolescents, we note that boys are more concerned than girls with success in studies, in obtaining a college education, and in securing a steady job. Nearly twice as many boys as girls wish for success in studies.[13] Boys likewise seem to be much more insistent in their wishes for self-improvement and for such material possessions as a car, a bicycle, and a tennis racket. However, wishes for health, popularity, and clothes are more frequently expressed by girls than boys. But both are primarily and about equally desirous of lasting happiness. Both likewise are equally

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[12] *Ibid.*, 193–212.

[13] *Sister* Mildred Knoebber, *Self-Revelation of the Adolescent Girl*, 159.

desirous of money as a luxury. The number that would like to lead a good life is about the same among boys and girls.[14]

Perhaps the reader would be interested in noting the combination of wishes which are expressed by some of the boys. The following are selected at random:

My wishes would be: a better home to live in, more money for our needs, a date with a girl.

To lead a good holy life, to become strong, to become more like Knute Rockne.

A real good job, a nice new car, a clean and beautiful girl.

My mother to be still living, my brother and sister to be still living, these are my only wishes.

Better marks, a happy death, never commit a mortal sin.

A good Catholic girl for a wife, go to heaven when we die, a nice car.

A million dollars and remain a good Catholic.

A home of our own, a car, a little spending money.

Get out of the clutches of impurity, understanding parents, not so darn many drives at school.

A better build, make the Big Leagues, be a saint.

An auto trip around the world and a mind to study.

Plenty of money, an airplane, a fast car.

To find a good girl who really likes me, graduate with honors, job as a head coach.

A home in the woods, enough to eat and drink, heaven in the end.

Be good in sports, my parents blessed by God, my girl friend's parents blessed by God.

To be a perfect Catholic boy, to be of more help to my mother, to live in the country the year round.

Good looks, brains, a girl who doesn't drink.

To be a martyr, to be a priest, to lead a good Catholic life like the saints.

A car, a fighting plane, to die in my plane in a death dive swooping down on an enemy.

A McBride letter, a sweet, refined girl, sense enough not to get married too soon.

Some way to understand geometry, a bike, one good, true friend.

A sport model coupé, $5 spending money a week, permission to take my date out at night by myself.

No school, no homework, no set time to get up in the morning.

Be pleasing to God, a good education and a good job, and Deanna Durbin.

That mother would live for a long time, enough money to support her, that she and I will both go to heaven.

A pair of shoes, a decent suit of clothes, that my mother would be well.

A job with sufficient salary so my mother would not have to work, a better home with a modern kitchen for her.

More love in our home, that Dad would be home oftener, be sure to get our whole family to heaven.

A number of boys are apparently dominated by a single desire, for they took but one wish. Characteristic are the following:

I have only one wish, to clean myself in Confession.

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[14] *Ibid.*, 159.

Plenty of good, clean books to read, that's all.

To become pure — to have a sin I committed completely erased from my physical and spiritual being.

Just enough money so my mother could enjoy life.

I would take only one, to have always a clean soul and be prepared to meet God at any time.

The Boy's "Biggest" Personal Problem

We have almost come to the end of our specific treatment of individual questions. One more, however, remains and that a summary question. All through the preceding chapters we have considered the incidence of specific problems in the adolescent's life. At this point we wish to devote our attention to what the boy considers to be his "biggest" personal problem, i.e., the problem which worries or troubles him most.

In obtaining this information we asked the boy to appraise all his problems and then to tell us what he regarded as the dominating problem in his life, but only if he had such an outstanding problem.

TABLE 41. "My 'Biggest' Personal Problem or Worry That Troubles Me Most," According to 2000 Catholic High-School Boys

Rank	*Problem or worry that troubles the adolescent boy most*	*Percentage frequency*				
		Freshmen	*Sophomores*	*Juniors*	*Seniors*	*All classes*
1.	Purity: breaking a habit of self-abuse, overcoming impure thoughts, unsettled on what is sinful	13.0	20.3	23.2	26.0	20.6
2.	Vocation: deciding on my future, what I'll turn out to be	12.8	11.2	19.8	24.6	17.1
3.	Difficulties in school, in studies	12.4	13.0	11.0	9.2	11.4
4.	Financial difficulties: paying school bills, obtaining a job, getting needs, clothes, etc.	6.4	7.2	8.8	11.2	8.4
5.	Social relations, life problems, dealings with others	3.0	4.2	5.8	6.0	4.8
6.	Girls, girl-friend troubles	2.8	3.0	4.2	5.2	3.6
7.	Difficulties at home, misunderstood, no liberty, quarrels, etc.	4.8	4.0	2.6	2.8	3.6
8.	Religious difficulties, doubts, salvation worry	3.0	3.6	2.0	2.2	2.7
9.	Failures, various; fear of failing in the future	1.2	.8	2.6	4.4	2.3
10.	Health, illness	1.0	2.2	2.8	2.4	2.1
11.	Personal: personality, complexion, etc.	1.1	2.2	1.4	2.2	1.7
12.	How I'll be able to get or continue my education	1.2	1.4	1.6	2.8	1.7
13.	Miscellaneous	1.6	2.4	2.0	1.2	1.8
14.	Have no "biggest" problem	44.4	35.2	24.0	17.0	30.2
15.	No answer	2.0	1.8	2.8	1.0	1.9

The question read: *What is your biggest personal problem or difficulty in life, i.e., what worries or troubles you most? (If you haven't a "biggest" problem, write "none.")*

The replies received to this question are presented in Table 41.

An analysis of our findings reveals purity as the top-ranking, dominating problem among high-school boys. One out of every five mentions difficulties in this field as the "biggest" problem in his life, the one that troubles him most. For some the crux of their problem lies in being puzzled over what is right and what is wrong; for others it is the difficulty of keeping away from the occasion of sin. Some of these find it difficult to refrain from indecent magazines. A junior, in expressing himself on this problem, says, "I think there should be a stricter enforcement in keeping dirty magazines off the newsstands. I think the greatest problem of boys today is to keep away from reading this indecent literature." A senior adds, "I think that if companies were not allowed to put out dirty books the sex problem would be cut in half." The majority, however, are confronted with the problem of ridding their mind of impure thoughts, or of breaking an unfortunate habit. Too many have the difficulty of the senior who explains, "I have formed a bad habit of self-abuse which now I don't know how to stop. It's got me worried for fear I might become a lunatic because of it."

Indecision over one's vocation is only second to purity as a dominating problem. The majority who mention this difficulty want to know how they can know for certain whether they are choosing the right vocation or not. Many, too, feel torn between two callings, the one in the priesthood or religious life, the other in the world.

Of all the problems that adolescents meet during their high-school years, those which cause them the most trouble refer in nearly six out of ten cases to purity, vocation, difficulties in studies, or difficulties of a financial nature. Three out of ten, however, say they have no one problem which they consider their "biggest." No doubt many of these also mean that none of their problems is serious enough to be considered "big."

The bits of detail with which most of the boys clothe their reply in stating their dominating problem are helpful in obtaining a fuller picture of these difficulties.

> My biggest problem is my fight to keep my mind clean which is a mighty tough proposition in the district where I live. (3)*
>
> What should I do? Get married or be a Brother? (2)
>
> My biggest is feeling that older people are not interested in me. When they don't seem to understand you what should you do about it? (1)
>
> It is the fear of becoming like some men whom I have had dealings with in an impure way. (3)

* The number following each statement indicates the year in high school of the boy who is being quoted.

Breaking away from a bad habit of handling myself which I formed four years ago. (4)

I am a small boy and I wish I were bigger. The feeling is always with me that I am inferior to other boys. (2)

My biggest problem is keeping my parents from discovering the truth about me. (4)

It may sound foolish but it's a girl. (4)

Sex, because I'm exposed to it all the time. It is so hard to keep pure the way things are today. We should be given suggestions on what attitude to take toward ads and things you see on the street. (4)

My mother and father getting drunk; it puts me in the dumps. (1)

How to keep away from a certain sin that worries me more than anything I can think of. (4)

Fear of the bill collector and how to get money so we will have enough to live on at home. (4)

Winning the girl I love. (4)

Self-pollution, but I am making headway in overcoming it. (2)

My vocation: now and then I am very ardent for the priesthood, then again the girls get the upper hand. I cannot come to a decision. (4)

Too many girls. The one I want doesn't want me and the one that wants me I don't want. (3)

The temptation to abuse myself and sometimes I cannot control it. (4)

A strange feeling that I'm going to lose my religion. (1)

I can't seem to be good, can't control myself, continually getting into trouble. (2)

Can't find anyone whom I might ask about certain things which worry me all the time. (3)

Mine is a terrible memory. I can read a page again and again without getting anything out of it. (1)

Not going to Communion because of a habit of impurity and my father raising hell with me because I don't go, whether I am fit or not. (3)

Worrying over whether my Confessions are bad, and low grades in my studies. (2)

Mother won't allow me to go out with the same girl more than a few times. When she hears of it she forbids me to go with the girl again. Lets me take girls only to formal dances but never to the movies. I'm a senior and this interference gets me. (4)

How can a fellow be a popular fellow without doing what the crowd does? It is a real problem to find good, clean, honest fellows to go with. (4)

A sin which I haven't the will power to stop committing. (1)

I cannot figure out what I am to be and what makes it worse my parents think that because I don't, I haven't any ambition. (4)

The persistent idea that there is something wrong with me mentally; maybe it is just my imagination. (3)

Trying to incite some ambition in myself. (4)

My greatest problem is financial. I am one in a large family of ten. We hardly have enough to eat so I don't get any spending money like other boys. My mother cannot afford it and so I don't get to go anywhere. (4)

Keeping up with the class in mathematics, and getting people to understand my attitude and character. (4)

Mathematics, it makes me so depressed. It seems out of my sphere and worries me a great deal. (2)

I wonder where everything gets me. What does it all mean? I'm in a daze about everything, everything is so contradictory. (3)

The way I feel toward girls I think I'm sex crazy. If I were normal I don't think I would be so "sexy." (4)

Some of the boys seem to have derived relief from "writing out" their problem, for they went on to explain at length. All of these referred to various difficulties mentioned above, but we present three of them for the reader's perusal.

> The biggest problem in my life, and from what I hear, in the lives of practically 90 per cent of the Catholic high-school students, is holy purity. With organized vice at the high ebb at which it is today, most young fellows can hardly resist the temptations. I'm telling you it is a problem which I don't know how I am going to get through during the next four or five years. . . . As wise as some of our good teachers are, I believe if they actually knew some of the things their Catholic students did, they would be shocked speechless. And it is not one boy but many of them. (Senior, seventeen years old.)
>
> The thing that troubles and pains me most is my unpopularity. I find it most difficult to make and keep friends. I've often wondered why it is that the only time they will go with me is when I am the only one around. I've thought that possibly my skin makes me always uninvited; but then why should my skin cause such an indifference to me. My looks aren't the best but I think I am better looking than most boys. I thought perhaps it's in the way I act. But even then there are several other fellows who act silly and yet their silliness makes them even more popular.
>
> The third thought that came to me was possibly that my unpopularity lies in the way I dress. But my clothes are always the best my parents can buy and I try to wear them right.
>
> I have tried to work my way into friendship by doing the things the other boys do, getting into their games, etc. I like all the fellows and like to be with them and do what they do, but it doesn't work out. I've tried everything but I'm still unpopular. (Sophomore, fifteen years old.)
>
> I believe one of the biggest mistakes that teachers make is to give praise to a young lad who is doing very fine work in his lessons. This gives the other lads the idea that he is favoring this boy and they then call him "pet" and say he has "suction." This razzing leads the lad to purposely quit his studying and try to do things that will merit a "bawling out," and thus his grades fall. By this he hopes the other boys will stop their razzing. This may not be the case with some boys but I am one of those "unfortunate" lads and often I purposely miss my lessons in hopes that the persecution will end. For myself, I would rather not be praised for excellent work and thus retain the friendship of the other boys. I do not think teachers should take one boy and set him up as an example of good work and behavior or even of fine religious action. Treat all boys as equals and show no favoritism. Let them praise the boy who is low, he needs it, but they should lay off making life miserable for the smart boy. (Junior, sixteen years old.)

We feel we cannot let this last comment pass without adding that, in general, encouragement is something of which every adolescent is very much in need. This fact is true even of boys like the one who made this last remark. However, in encouraging such students, the teacher must be tactful and careful lest his compliments prove a source of difficulty instead of help.

VI

SUMMARY

Chapter 18

THE ADOLESCENT IN REVIEW

In coming to the end of a work dealing with a field as vast as the problems of the adolescent, one cannot help feeling that he has merely scratched the surface of his subject. There still remains so much to be investigated and studied relative to the adolescent and his problems before we can say we have a body of knowledge detailed enough to provide an adequate basis for guiding our adolescents with maximum success along the path to complete development. In our present study we have only combed through some of the facts concerning the adolescent's reactions to the process of growing up. We have merely probed into his various difficulties sufficiently to indicate the trends of his problems which, we hope, point a bit more definitely to the direction for further research in this interesting phase of adolescent study.

The boy's more detailed problems lying within the realm of his home, school, and social environment, as well as his reactions to the changing circumstances within each phase of this environment, still remain to be studied; also, the important phase of how these problems are interrelated; and likewise the specific moral difficulties which may cluster about the various major problems which our findings have revealed. If our efforts are to be exerted to best advantage, we must know what phases in the development of the adolescent are presently being neglected, what evaluations he is failing to make, what attitudes he is adopting toward the many moral issues that cross his path at every turn. These facts must be known more clearly before the educational forces of the home, the school, and the church can be certain that their present efforts are achieving the goals they are supposing them to achieve.

We feel, however, that the findings of the present study are a definite step forward in this direction, for they have brought us much closer to the mind of the modern adolescent and have given us an insight not only into what he regards as his major problems but into his own reactions to the efforts we are presently exerting in his regard. We feel that this knowledge is well-nigh indispensable, for the effectiveness of our dealings with the adolescent depends on the extent to which he feels we understand his problems; if our methods suggest the contrary we lose his sympathetic cooperation and anything we say or do will be regarded by him as inapplicable.

Perhaps there is nothing in our findings that is absolutely new in

the sense of never having been heard of before; but a rediscovery of the problems of the adolescent against the modern background, particularly when the identification of these problems comes from the adolescent himself, gives us more of an assurance that we know where we are going, and provides a lead that will set us off on the right step when we cross into the province of directing the lives of our modern high-school boys.

Modern Adolescents Fundamentally Wholesome

As we look back over our findings, there are certain facts which impress themselves on our mind, and some of which are more or less intangible, for they seem to issue more from the whole group of responses taken together rather than from any individual response to any individual question. Foremost among our impressions is the underlying wholesomeness of the adolescent boy. Underneath all his various problems, reactionary responses, and occasionally extreme reactions lies a heart of gold and willingness to do what is right. He wants to make the most of his abilities and opportunities and to live his life to the full with all his being. His desires, his thoughts, and his will point fundamentally in the right direction. For this reason we are prompted to take an optimistic view of the coming generation. Potential abilities that make for perfect manhood are present in abundance in the modern boy. It is for us to provide the guiding hand and the inspiration to insure that such material of promise be not wrecked on the shores of adolescent misadventure or on the shoals of adult indifferentism.

The frankness, lighthearted gaiety, and fundamental goodness which characterize the modern adolescent incline us to disagree with the chronic pessimists who regard each generation's crop of adolescents as a "pack of devils going to the dogs." We are more inclined, instead, to agree with Janet Erskine Stuart that "from 14 to 21 is the wonderland of our life, the age of our mysticism, the years of ideals."[1]

"Flaming Youth," a Popular Misconception

Movies and realistic fiction have combined very successfully in picturing modern adolescents as having cut loose from all shackles of restraint, as indulging their every desire, as drinking, petting, sinning, as being disillusioned, cynical, sophisticated, and hardened to the world. As a result, the hue and cry of "flaming youth" has become a popular one, especially with elders who turn back wistfully to their own adolescence, and look at it through the rose-colored spectacles and the softening mist of mellowing years. Consequently, too many are singing the lamentation:

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[1] "Essay on Color" in *Life and Letters of Janet Erskine Stuart* by Maud Monahan (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1922), 14.

> Our earth is degenerate in these latter days. There are signs that the world is coming to an end. Children no longer obey their parents. The end of the world is manifestly drawing near.

Yet this very jeremiad was inscribed on a clay tablet in the Mesopotamian Valley some 6000 years ago.

Another observation that comes from an overview of our results is the general sameness of problem trends among all the adolescents of our study, regardless of the school or geographical location from which they come. Practically all have a tendency to feel misunderstood, to worry about their future, to be anxious over their schoolwork, and to feel rather uncertain about their own status. There are exceptions to this general uniformity, however, in the matter of satisfaction with social opportunities provided by Catholic authorities and with the curricular offerings of the school. In these two fields especially the incidence of relative problems varies considerably according to the community.

Specific Problems Demand Individual Approach

In regard to specific problems, however, this uniformity from individual to individual does not exist. Problems which appear on the surface to be the same, often prove upon further investigation to be quite different. The adolescent's native equipment, home background, and other environmental circumstances, not to mention the presence of other interrelated problems, tend to render each individual's problems unique. For this reason it is impossible to provide a formula for dealing with adolescent problems.

The problems of one boy are never an exact duplicate of those of another; hence, an individual approach is always necessary. However, next to specific knowledge of the individual, a general awareness of the needs and problems of the modern adolescent is most helpful in dealing successfully with specific problems as they arise.

Problems Never Occur Singly

Another point that stands out in our data is that problems never seem to occur singly; they are tied up with one another and assume different degrees of significance from boy to boy. An investigation of one problem frequently reveals other underlying problems of a different type, inextricably interrelated and to a certain extent causative. For example, underlying a boy's social maladjustment may be a lack of self-confidence coupled with financial and parental difficulties within his home. Hence, the necessity of learning as much as possible about the total problem situation and background, including the particular way in which the individual perceives his own problem. Such case-study diagnosis will tend rather naturally to merge into the proper therapy.

Still another point that impresses itself upon our mind as we con-

sider our findings as a whole is that the greatest change in the adolescent during his four years of high school seems to take place between the time he enters high school and the beginning of his second year. In other words, for the majority of boys, the greatest increase in problems of adjustment occurs during their freshman year in high school. This is particularly noticeable in the number of problems which occur in the realm of the boy's social life. Similar larger-than-ordinary differences between age groups are reflected in the daydreams, subjects of conversation, ideals, wishes, and "biggest" problem of the boys. Perhaps the wider social contacts which attendance at high school brings, together with the natural emotional development which the boy undergoes during this period, are the factors accountable for this rather sudden change between the freshman and sophomore years.

Wholesome Facts in Our Findings

We stated above that the outstanding impression resulting from our study was that the modern adolescent is fundamentally wholesome despite the fact that he finds problems aplenty in every phase of his life. We should like to present some of the corroborating evidence prompting this optimistic outlook. First of all, within the home 90 per cent of the boys are satisfied and happy; 88 per cent feel so proud of their parents that they like to have others see and meet them; 89 per cent state that their dealings with their father are usually satisfactory; 83 per cent state that their dealings with their mother are usually satisfactory; 84 per cent feel that their parents treat them as they should be treated and hence approve of the way they are trying to guide them; 61 per cent spend one half or more of their leisure time at home; and 58 per cent have chosen their parents as their confidant.

In regard to the reception of the sacraments, 98 per cent like to go to Holy Communion, and 86 per cent like to go to Confession, while 75 per cent feel that Confession definitely helps them with their personal problems. Their high respect for religious values is further revealed in the large number (40 per cent) who included a spiritual good among their wishes.

With respect to their future the majority of boys, though worried, are either enthusiastic or hopeful, while 78 per cent are satisfied and happy with their life at present. Not only that, but 83 per cent feel as successful as the average.

Eighty-six per cent of the boys never drink anything stronger than beer when out with their friends.

Although the general picture is not quite so optimistic in the realm of the school, nevertheless the large majority regard their school life as happy, and state that they themselves want to go to school; less than one in ten is in school because someone is forcing him to attend.

Furthermore, 70 per cent get along well with their teachers, while 78 per cent feel that the school is preparing them for life.

Of course, there is another side to this picture, but we shall delay treating this until we have presented a summary of our findings in the form of a composite picture of the modern adolescent.

Throughout this study we have focused our attention on more or less specific problems. This procedure made it somewhat difficult for us to obtain a composite picture of the adolescent. We shall now try to present a synthesized view of the adolescent, reflecting the whole scheme of problems as they are found in the average boy.

A Picture of Jack, the Typical Adolescent

In presenting a composite picture of the typical high-school adolescent, we shall be guided by the characteristic replies of 2000 boys to over 200 questions which we put to them in our investigation. We admit that not a single boy will fit perfectly into the portrait which we are to paint, for our sketch will represent that mythical individual known as the "average" adolescent. Strictly speaking, not a single boy in the flesh is "average" in the true sense of the term; he is an individual with his own peculiar personality traits and with problems varying according to individual circumstances. However, he is likely to fit into the general outlines of this picture, for the characteristics and salient features of the "typical" adolescent will be drawn according to the characteristics and general tendencies which he, together with 1999 other adolescents, manifest in answering our questions, telling us of their views and problems.

Our typical adolescent, Jack, is a hypothetical high-school student who comes from a home where both father and mother are living quite happily together and where there are three other children besides himself. The chances are about even that his family experiences financial difficulties which are severe enough to cause him worry and thus constitute a definite problem for him. He regards religion as an important factor in his family's life, although the chances are even that prayers are not said regularly in his home.

Satisfied With Parents and Home

He is satisfied and happy at home — only one chance in ten that he is not — and supports this statement by saying that he spends half or more of his leisure time there. He feels proud of his parents and likes to have his friends see and meet them, for he feels that both his father and his mother are friendly and interested in him; but at the same time he is inclined to regard his father's attitude toward him as cold or indifferent at times. Yet he obeys his father out of love rather than out of fear.

Jack feels that he is treated as a young man of his age should be treated, for he usually has weekly spending money, is relatively free

from scoldings, and in general is allowed as many social liberties as other boys of his age. He does not think there is too much discipline in his home, even though he is inclined to think that his parents are too careful about him and a bit too much concerned about what he does. He has a set time to be in at night and generally conforms, but not always. He also manifests an occasional tendency to go contrary to parental orders in selecting his companions. But this is not because he fails to understand the reasons why he should obey.

Though his dealings with both his father and his mother are usually satisfactory, he is just as likely to consider some of their ideas as old fashioned as not. He is not too far removed from regarding some of his father's commands as unreasonable, though he is not so much inclined to think this way about his mother's demands. The inevitably close contacts that go with living together in the home are liable to prove a source of further problems for him in the form of conflicts with his parents as well as with other members of the household.

In general, Jack approves of the way his parents try to guide him but he is not likely to discuss his problems with them; however, if he does, it will be with his mother rather than with his father, for he is inclined to feel that she understands his difficulties better than his father does. When parents do misunderstand, the boy feels that it is because they do not know him well enough and that they interpret his actions in view of the background of their own youth when times were very much different.

School Life Leaves Much to Be Desired

If the boy is well adjusted at home, the chances are good that he is well adjusted in the world outside of the home. However, even if Jack gets along well at home, he may have difficulty with his studies. According to his own opinion, Jack is only fairly successful in his studies, but he feels he could be more successful if he were more interested, if he had a better scholastic foundation, if he had more intelligence, and if he had better teachers than he has at present.

He usually has a regular job after school and on week ends, but it does not interfere with his studies. The radio, people talking in his presence, sports, and thoughts about girls, which, he says, make it difficult for him to concentrate, interfere with his studies more than his part-time job. However, he is by no means decided in saying that girls hinder him in his studies, for he is just as likely to be of the opposite opinion.

Jack is fairly well satisfied with the marks he gets in school, though he admits that low marks almost always depress him greatly. At home his parents encourage him and "pep him up" in his studies but not as much as he would like. However, insistence on high marks does not always encourage him, for nearly half of the time it is liable to have the contrary effect. But he takes his studies rather seriously

nevertheless, as is evidenced by the fact that he is inclined to worry quite a bit over them.

In school he feels fairly well fitted for the subjects he has to take though the chances are two out of five that he may feel the opposite, and when he does he is most likely to mention mathematics or Latin as the subject for which he feels ill fitted. But fitted or not, he is quite definitely of the opinion that he has to take certain subjects which will not do him any good later on. And when asked which subjects he has in mind, his response is most likely to include Latin, mathematics, and ancient history. As a matter of fact, he mentions difficulties in these subjects along with difficulties in science and English as constituting his biggest problem in school life. Among his other "big" problems he lists difficulty in studying, low grades, difficulties with teachers, and homework troubles. Some of the troubles with his homework may be traced to his home, for the possibilities are about equal that he does not have a place to study there. On the other hand, he is quite definitely of the opinion that his teachers are sometimes unreasonable in their homework demands.

Jack's difficulties with his teachers are most distressing when they do occur, but in general he gets along with his teachers quite well, for he feels they usually treat him fairly well, though it annoys him to no end that many of his teachers have "pets" among the students. Yet, he regards the majority of his teachers as friendly, intelligent, and possessing ability to teach, but he is rather hesitant to say that all his teachers are interested in him, or that all are as helpful as they could be; in reality, he is quite set in his opinion that they could be more helpful to him than they are. He is likewise hesitant about agreeing that all his teachers are even tempered, kind, patient, and possess a sense of humor, yet he respects rather than fears them. He also hesitates to agree that all his teachers are good disciplinarians or that all are understanding. As a matter of fact, he feels that his teachers do not understand his difficulties; and this because they do not know enough about his private life or the problems he faces outside of school. Or he may feel that teachers are simply not interested in him. In this case he is not likely to lay the blame on himself.

Despite his difficulties in school, he regards his school life as happy. Perhaps this is because he wants to go to school, for in only one chance out of ten would he prefer not to go. Another reason for his general satisfaction with school may be the fact that he feels that his studies are preparing him to meet life's problems and to earn a living later on.

He is fairly well satisfied, likewise, with the extracurricular program of the school. The chances are three to one that he is satisfied with the opportunities which he has to participate in such activities, while at the same time he does not feel that he has to participate in any activities which hinder him in any way. But when an activity

does hinder him, it is most likely to be one of the major sports. He is much less satisfied, however, with his own ability to participate in these sports, for he mentions this as one of his problems.

The Difficulty of Growing Up

In the realm of his personal life Jack finds himself getting into moods when he cannot seem to cheer up to save himself, while he is just as likely as not to feel so conscious of his faults at times that he cannot seem to enjoy anything. He puts the blame for his attacks of sadness and depression on difficulties in his studies, troubles at home, disappointments, and certain sins which he has committed.

Though the chances are only one to four that he feels he lacks self-confidence, the chances are about even that he feels he has more self-confidence than the average person. His frequent lapses from the path of right incline him to regard himself as not having much backbone of his own, but this is not usually the case.

Offhand he says he feels he understands himself quite well, but other evidence which he offers argues to the contrary. He is not quite so sure, however, of understanding the world of reality, for he says he more or less frequently feels that life is too complicated to understand what it is all about. Yet the responsibilities that await him when he grows up ordinarily do not cause him to fear. However, he does have fears. He fears failure. He dreads falling into serious sin, especially into impure habits, and he dreads the consequences of sin, not the least of which is hell.

The chances are about even that he worries easily and is easily discouraged. He is most likely to worry about school difficulties, conditions at home, and impurity difficulties. He worries only a very little about conditions in the world or about whether he is normal or not, though the chances are one in five that he is bothered about this latter question.

Feelings of uncertainty are quite characteristic of him and hence we are not surprised to hear him say that he has serious doubts about a number of things which he deems rather important. When asked what these doubts refer to, he is most likely to tell us that they concern purity, religion, his vocation, and, in general, what may be termed "life problems." He is inclined to be puzzled over the disagreement between the teachings of the Church and certain popular ideas, and sometimes the things he hears from others cause him to question certain things in his religion, but this is not the general rule.

All in all, he feels pretty well satisfied with life. He says he has had a happy childhood and considers his life at present happy. He does not regard himself as inclined to be nervous; he is satisfied with his health and fairly well satisfied with his character, though the chances are one in four that he is likely to be dissatisfied with the latter.

Though he is inclined to be enthusiastic and hopeful about the future, he is nevertheless worried about it, and especially about being able to find a job later on. Perhaps one of the factors entering in here is the fact that he has not settled as yet the question of his vocation; he admits that this causes him considerable worry. He has talked over this question with others, particularly with his parents, but it is rather rare that he has consulted anyone else. According to his opinion, the school has not helped him in this matter. Furthermore, he points the issue by stating that he has not had the opportunity of speaking to his teachers about his personal problems.

This situation is somewhat relieved, however, for he usually has someone with whom he can talk over his intimate problems outside the school. In most cases he is likely to consult one or both of his parents. Nevertheless, the chances are one in four that he has no one in whom to confide.

The Give-and-Take of Social Adjustment

In the realm of his social life Jack is fairly well adjusted. He makes friends rather easily and gets along with others without too much difficulty, though the chances are about even that he frequently feels that his interests are different from those of others. But it is only rarely that he feels lonely. When he does, it is usually because of a lack of friends or something to do, or because certain social opportunities are lacking. Poor personality is likewise advanced as a reason in certain instances.

Jack frequently feels out of place because of a feeling of awkwardness and more often than not shuns others because of it. He is likewise inclined to be rather seriously concerned about his shyness, although the possibilities are three to two that it is only rarely that he is thus concerned. Despite his inward instability, he tends to feel as successful as the average, but when he does not, serious mental struggles ensue which he does not know how to overcome.

One of the boy's more painful social problems is a feeling of not being understood by some of his boy friends and girl friends. Aside from these, he feels that quite a few of the older people, especially relatives, likewise fail to understand him. He feels that the reason for this is that others do not understand his viewpoint, that they do not know him well enough, and that because he is different they fail to see things as he does. However, these occasional misunderstandings do not seriously interfere with his getting along with others.

There is an even chance that his associates have had, at least on occasion, a bad influence upon him. His companions do not regard him as a "sissy" if he does not use bad language. However, they are likely to be jealous if he or any other boy assumes the leadership among them.

Drink is not a problem with Jack. He never takes anything stronger

than beer when out with his friends and it is only seldom that he drinks that. He does not find abstention difficult, for neither his boy friends nor girl friends approve of his drinking when out with them.

Girls Become a New Interest in Life

The question of girl friends brings up a problem that is on his mind more or less continually, both because of his newly awakened interest in them and because of his being uncertain of how he stands with certain ones. He likes to feel attractive to them but he is not sure that he is; as a matter of fact, he is inclined to feel that he is not. Most of his girl friends are Catholic — though the chances are one in four that they are not — and he goes out with them more or less frequently, with the possibilities being about even that he will be invited by his girl friend's parents to visit her in her home.

In his opinion, girls do not hinder him spiritually but instead are a source of help to him, usually by way of inspiring him to strive more earnestly for the worth-while things of life.

He is quite bitter in his complaints that neither the school nor the parish furnishes sufficient social opportunities where he and his girl friend can come together for an evening of entertainment in a wholesome atmosphere. It is the failure of Catholic agencies to provide such opportunities for social recreation which may be partly responsible for some of his unsound attitudes in regard to his relations with his girl friend.

Although ordinarily he does not regard petting and necking as part of the routine of going out with his girl, he does not regard such conduct as sinful nor even remotely so, for, as he reasons, practically everyone else is doing it. If these expressed opinions are really his convictions, how urgent is the need for teaching him the principles of Christian morality. The odds are slightly in favor of his being of the opinion that girls expect such conduct of him, while on his part he feels it is not necessary for popularity, though the chances are one in three he might feel the opposite.

Despite these views, Jack feels he knows what should be the proper attitude toward sex. He likewise feels he knows what is a sin in regard to purity but he is not clear as to what conduct is forbidden on a date. After considering this matter further he states that he needs clearer rules on what is sinful regarding impure thoughts, words, and actions, and feels that the school should give him more instruction in these matters.

Introduction to the Subject of Sex

We can understand much of Jack's misinformation on the subject of sex when we realize that he obtained his first information on this subject from such unwholesome sources as companions, the street, books, magazines — the chances being only one in six that he was

introduced to this subject by either his father, mother, or a priest. Jack is quite frank in admitting that this information has had a bad effect on him, not only by suggesting immoral ideas to him, but by causing him to think of sex as degrading. However, his parents' neglect of their duty in this regard has not caused him to lose confidence in them.

Since his introduction to the subject of sex he has added to his information, but largely from sources which are no better than the tainted sources from which he obtained his first misinformation. More of his later knowledge on this subject has been obtained from reading material such as books and magazines as well as from the priest and teachers, but less from the street and parents.

His most frequent reaction to the thought of sex is one of puzzlement. He does not understand why he should experience such strange urges. Somewhat less frequent is the reaction in which he regards sex as something sacred, though he is inclined at the same time to regard it as a source of thrills or an opportunity for pleasure.

Jack is inclined to worry quite a bit over difficulties in this field, for when asked to mention his biggest personal problem in life he lists difficulties in the realm of purity as his top-ranking problem. Indecision in the matter of vocation and difficulties in school and in his home come only second and third.

In the sacrament of Penance, Jack finds definite help in dealing with his personal problems but not as much as he might, for he is inclined to refrain from asking about his difficulties in Confession mainly because of a fear that the priest knows him, or because he fears others will think him peculiar if he stays in the confessional too long. He likes to go to Confession, however, and goes because he wants to rather than because he is told to go. He also likes to go to Holy Communion, but the chances are one in three that "how to appreciate the Mass" constitutes a definite problem for him. In regard to religion in general, he is inclined to consider it as a thing of joy and more as a help than as a hindrance. However, the possibilities are one in four that he does not regard religion as something joyful. He is satisfied with the practicality of the religion courses that are given to him in school, though again the chances are about one in five that he is likely to be of the opposite opinion. He is likewise satisfied with the opportunities for Catholic activities which the school offers him, although he is less satisfied with his parish in this regard. As a matter of fact, Jack is inclined to believe that his parish is not nearly so interested as it should be in the life of its young people.

Revelation of the Adolescent Mind

We noted above that Jack spends half or more of his leisure time at home. The other half he divides between sports, movies, talking with his friends, social activities, and just plain daydreaming. It

would seem, however, that either many of these activities are uninteresting or that many of his leisure hours are unprovided for, for the chances weigh in favor of his finding his leisure time wearisome. It would seem that this is often because he has nothing to do. For this reason and others he spends, on an average, about a half hour a day in daydreaming about girls, being a hero, especially in sports, and his future career.

We get another inkling of what is usually on his mind when he does not have anything in particular to do, from the subjects which he and his boy friends are most likely to talk about when they get together. Sports, girls, school and teachers, social activities, and sex head the list in the order mentioned.

A further insight into Jack's mind is obtained by examining the things he wishes for most of all. They really show us what he values most highly in life. Topmost among his wishes is money, but he wishes for it more as a necessity than as a luxury, for he often has in mind the needs of his family at home. But second is a car or some other material possession of equal rank. In the third place, however, he wishes for lasting happiness or heaven. If he could have more than three wishes, he would ask for a permanent job, a good girl friend, success in his future, personal improvement, and more spiritual strength. To a certain extent these wishes point to what he regards as ideal but they do not constitute his ideal. His ideal is rather some person whom he knows or of whom he has heard or read, and is usually of the hero type. For this reason his ideal is most likely to be an athletic hero. The chances of his father or Christ being mentioned as his ideal are only one in three or one in four, respectively.

Jack's interests are likewise indicated by his reading. As a rule, he likes to read during his leisure time and feels that such reading influences him very much. For the most part, he reads magazines such as *Life, Look, Colliers, The Catholic Boy, Liberty, Popular Mechanics, Reader's Digest,* and a wide selection of cheap magazines, many of which are trashy.

Jack and the Movies

Jack likes to go to the movies and does so on an average of once a week and every once in a while twice a week. He goes for the enjoyment he gets out of it and because it helps him pass the time. If he has a choice in the matter, he will select a mystery movie, musical comedy, or comedy of manners. Though he does not regard movies as an important guiding influence in his life because, as he says, "they are too farfetched," he nevertheless admits that they have more or less frequently influenced his conduct and his way of thinking. The chances are one in four, however, that he does regard them as an important guiding influence in his life, and this because he feels

they show him how to live and teach him what is right and what is wrong.

The movies have influenced his conduct by causing him to imitate the hero in his actions and in his manners, and have influenced his thinking by giving him new ideas and new slants on life. In the matter of morals, they have likewise had an influence upon him by giving him wrong ideas about sex, love, and petting, but this has not happened frequently as a general rule. Despite the grandiose settings and display of luxury that frequently confront him on the screen, he feels that, on the whole, movies have not caused him to become dissatisfied with life. He also feels that, generally speaking, they have not caused him to become less respectful of authority. These, of course, are Jack's own opinions.

Thus we have the picture of the average adolescent. According to this sketchy outline, he is one who is fairly well adjusted to life, is happy, and quite well satisfied not only in his home environment but likewise in his school and social life. Such a picture is likely, however, to lead us into taking too optimistic a view not only of the adolescent and his problems but of our educational efforts in his regard as well. For this reason we shall single out some of our findings which should cause us to stop and think.

Facts Which Call for Action

With regard to the home, we note that 30 per cent of the fathers are accused by their sons of being cold and indifferent to them at times, while 39 per cent are said to be unreasonable in their commands. Thirty-three per cent of the mothers are said to be unreasonable in their demands. Further evidence of a lack of parental tact is had in the 43 per cent who say that their parents more or less frequently impose their own ideas upon them. In the matter of discipline within the home, 21 per cent regard their parents as lenient or too easy, while 38 per cent feel their parents are "too snoopish."

Nearly half of the boys (49 per cent) seldom, if ever, discuss their difficulties with their father, while 36 per cent seldom, if ever, bring their problems to their mother. A partial explanation for this is had in the fact that nearly half of the boys are not sure that their father understands their difficulties, while one third feel the same way about their mother. They feel they are not understood because their parents do not know them well enough or because they are old fashioned in their thinking.

Another phase of parental neglect is the woeful disregard on the part of parents to impart the necessary sex information to their children before the latter have a chance to be harmed by foul sources. In this matter all the educative authorities to which the boy is subject seem to have neglected their duty with consequent ill effects in

the form of added difficulties for the boy in the realm of purity. Nearly half of the boys feel that they need clearer rules on what is sinful and think the school should give a more adequate explanation of purity. One out of three is puzzled over sex, while over half are considerably worried over sex difficulties.

The fact that 74 per cent feel that they know what should be the proper attitude toward sex, although they manifest the opposite, seems to argue further that the present handling of this problem (which the boys rate as their biggest) is far from satisfactory. Proof is had in the fact that 24 per cent regard petting and necking as part of the routine of going out with a girl, while 32 per cent think it is necessary for popularity, and the number who regard such conduct as not sinful is five times as great as the number of those who think it is.

Some of the adolescent's erroneous ideas in this regard have been gathered from the motion pictures, for 44 per cent admit that they have acquired wrong ideas about sex, love, and petting from the movies. It is important to note that 25 per cent regard the movies as an important guiding influence in their life.

In the realm of the adolescent's social life we find 56 per cent complaining that their parish does not provide sufficient opportunities for social recreation. Perhaps this partially explains why 25 per cent of the boys say some or all of their best girl friends are non-Catholics. There is likewise neglect on the part of the home to provide a wholesome atmosphere for social recreation, for 50 per cent of the boys say that they are not always welcome to bring their friends to their home, while 19 per cent of these say that they are never encouraged to do so.

Training in the proper use of leisure as well as in an appreciation of magazine literature is apparently neglected to a grave extent, for 51 per cent say they find their leisure time wearisome at times, while on the list of magazines which they most frequently read there are too few Catholic periodicals; magazines of the frivolous if not dangerous type predominate.

A further point that may cause us to reflect on the kind of training we are giving our adolescents is found in the fact that 43 per cent feel that they have not much backbone of their own. Are we neglecting the training of the will? Is it true that we are failing to inculcate a sense of responsibility?

Other points worthy of mention are the facts that 33 per cent of our adolescent boys have no ideal; that 26 per cent have no confidant to whom they can go with their intimate problems; that 60 per cent feel misunderstood; that 81 per cent get jealous of other boys who are leaders; and that the majority of those who have mental conflicts do not know how to solve them.

In the realm of the school we find 42 per cent who feel they have to take subjects for which they are not fitted, while 70 per cent feel

they have to take subjects which will not do them any good later on. Sixty-eight per cent of the students feel that their teachers could be more helpful than they are; 69 per cent feel that some of their teachers misunderstand them; 31 per cent feel some of their teachers are not interested in them; and only 32 per cent refrain from accusing one or more of their teachers of having "pets." Guidance facilities are apparently lacking in many of the schools, for only 37 per cent state that they have the opportunity to speak to their teachers about their personal problems.

We now come to a few facts that should be of vital interest to every teacher of religion. Twenty per cent of our adolescents say that they do not find their religion course practical enough; 15 per cent feel "fed up" on religion as it is presented in their school; and only 65 per cent regard religion as a source of joy. Is this an indication of too much emphasis on the "don'ts" and not enough on the "do's"? Are we forgetting that, for the adolescent, negative commands do not suggest the positive as they do for the adult, but merely the negative? Furthermore, 35 per cent regard "how to learn to appreciate the Mass" as one of their problems. Twenty-eight per cent feel that their parishes do not offer them sufficient opportunities to engage in Catholic Action.

A Rating of the Boy's Major Problems

In taking an overview of our findings, we shall attempt a rating of the adolescent's major problems. In doing so, we shall keep in mind both the frequency with which the various problems are mentioned as well as the acuteness and intensity of reaction which the respective problems evoke in the life of the boy. With these two points in mind, our rating is as follows:

1. *The problem of purity.* There seems to be little doubt that difficulties in the realm of purity rank as the adolescent boy's top-ranking problem. Not only does the boy himself rate it as such but it figures in his worries, is a leading cause of his doubts, and is likewise a cause of his periods of sadness and depression. His gross misinformation on the subject puzzles him as to what is a sin and what is not, and frequently drives him to the gravest fears as to the consequences of an unfortunate habit. Further evidence of the extent and gravity of this problem in the boy's mind is had in the fact that more boys used the surplus space at the end of our problemmaire to comment in detail on their difficulties in the realm of purity than on any other problem.

2. *The problem of decision in the matter of vocation.* The problem of choosing a vocation is ever present in the mind of the high-school boy. It is a problem which causes him considerable worry. And this is true not only for the two thirds of the students who have not settled this question but for those who have decided as well, for these latter are not at all sure of the correctness of their decision. What adds to their anxiety in this matter is the fact that many parents are of

the opinion that a boy in high school should know what he wants to do in the future. Many parents feel that their son lacks ambition and interest because he has not come to a decision in regard to his future lifework. Related to this same problem is the boy's anxiety over the possibilities of obtaining work after high-school years have passed. Uncertainty as to the future comes up again and again in the boy's comments throughout the problemmaire.

3. *The feeling of not being understood by older people.* This problem ranks third, not because of the frequency with which it is mentioned, although it is referred to at one or the other time by well over half of the boys, but rather because of the poignant reaction that this difficulty has on the inner life of the boy. An adolescent's awareness that someone does not understand him is particularly acute because of the deep need he feels for being understood. It is his own lack of inward stability that calls for an understanding friend. But when this need is rebuffed, a host of other difficulties are likely to follow in train.

4. *Lack of social opportunities.* We are not too certain that school or financial difficulties should not come next, but, again, because of the sharpness of the reaction when social opportunities are lacking, we place this problem fourth. The natural physical, mental, and emotional development of adolescence emphasizes the need for social activities. Hence, the reason for many a sharp disagreement between son and parents over social liberties permitted in the home. The teenage boy feels that he has a positive right to social activities and feels most keenly any deprivation of or lack of provision for opportunities where he may meet other boys and girls of his own choice. Some of the sharpest and most critical comments which we received came from boys complaining about the failure of Catholic authorities to provide opportunities for social recreation.

5. *Financial difficulties.* It is true, this problem is not general but it is present in the lives of over half of the boys of our study. Because of the breadth of influence which it exercises upon the boy's whole life, and especially on his home and social life, it becomes a frequent subject of comment among the boy's worries and the top-ranking subject of his wishes. The adolescent considers a lack of money one of his principal problems, not only because of its cramping influence on his own social life but likewise because of the close bonds of affection which bind him to his family, their needs and interests becoming his needs and interests, their difficulties his difficulties.

6. *Difficulties within the school.* We are hesitant in listing the school problem as sixth since the average boy, when he takes into consideration all his relations within the school, is fairly well satisfied. However, difficulties within the school come near the top in the boy's own list of "biggest" problems. Then, too, anxiety over low grades and difficulties in studies constitute one of their major fears

and worries, while at the same time being listed as a principal cause of depressed feelings. The problem of having to take subjects for which they do not feel fitted and for which they see no use in the future is a puzzle for more than half of the boys.

Other problems, too, are quite prominent in the adolescent's life, such as girl-friend difficulties, lack of self-confidence, periods of moodiness, feelings of awkwardness and consequent avoidance of others, but these are not quite general enough to be considered for general ranking. As a matter of fact, there are few specific problems which are so generally present as to be found in all or even in most boys. The adolescent's problems are above all else specific and therefore, we repeat, the background of each problem must be studied before proper guidance can be offered.

But because many of the adolescent's problems are continuously changing as he advances through his teens, some becoming more complicated, others more personal, thus necessitating a continuous adjustment on his part, methods of meeting these difficulties rather than their specific solution must be stressed in our dealings with the boys.

We have brought forth sufficient evidence, we believe, to prove that the lives of our modern adolescents are filled with problems that are a distinct challenge to our patience, sympathy, and wisdom in guidance. But for all that, we have sufficient evidence likewise to convince us that modern adolescents offer both a challenge and an opportunity. Their frankness and freedom from hypocrisy is most refreshing. It is true that they want to be trusted and given responsibility, and that they desire sympathy and understanding, even to the point of taxing tact and patience to the utmost. However, if we give them this trust, show a sincere interest in them, act sympathetically and understandingly in our relations with them, they will be faithful in striving to see and to achieve the high ideals that we point out to them. But we must not be afraid to give them responsibility. Nor must we hesitate to let them know that God and their elders expect great things from them.

APPENDIX

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PROBLEM INVENTORY FOR HIGH SCHOOL BOYS

The Catholic University of America
Washington, D. C.

The purpose of this problemmaire is to give you boys in high school *a chance to tell us* — to tell all those who have charge of boys — what your problems are. By answering as truthfully as you can you will be helping thousands of boys in the future. *Do not sign your name to this paper.* All information is *strictly confidential;* so feel perfectly free to write what is on your mind. Neither your teachers nor anyone else at school will see these papers.

Most of the questions can be answered by encircling a *letter, word,* or *phrase;* however, for a few questions you must write out your answer.

Answer *all* questions, one after another in order; don't skip around.

MEANING OF SYMBOLS:

Y: Yes	YF: Yes Frequently	R: Rarely
N: No, or Never	O: Occasionally	?: Uncertain

---

1. Age....; Year in high school; I, II, III, IV.
2. Are you the oldest, second oldest, or youngest in your family? .....
3. *a*) Y N Is your father living?
   b) Y N Is your mother living?
   c) .....If either parent is dead, how old were you when the loss occurred?
4. Y N Are your parents separated (or divorced)?
5. *a*) ....Number of children in your family?
   b) ....Number of older brothers?
   c) ....Number of older sisters?
   d) ....Number of younger sisters?
   e) ....Number of others besides your immediate family living in your home?
6. Y O N Is your mother gainfully employed outside the home?
7. Y N ? Do financial troubles frequently create difficulties in your home?
8. Y N ? Are some prayers said regularly in your home?
9. Y N ? Have you a special place to study at home?
10. Y N ? Are you satisfied with your home to the extent that you would never think of running away from home?
11. Y N ? Are you overloaded with duties in or about your home?
12. YF O R Do you ever find yourself worrying about the financial condition of your family?
13. Y N ? Is religion an important factor in the life of your family?
14. Y N Are you usually happy when at home?
15. If not, why not? .....
    .....
    .....
    .....
16. Y N Are you living at home?
17. How much of your leisure time do you spend at home? *All of it, ¾ of it, ½ of it, ¼ of it, scarcely any, none?*
18. Y N ? Do you think there is too much discipline in your home?
19. Toward me my father is:
    a).....friendly and interested.
    b).....cold and indifferent.
    c).....at times friendly, at times indifferent.
20. Toward me my mother is:
    a).....friendly and interested.
    b).....cold and indifferent.
    c).....at times friendly, at times indifferent.
21. Y N ? Do you think your parents are too much concerned and too careful about you and what you do?
22. Y N Do you usually have some weekly spending money?
23. I regard my parents as: *strict, lenient, medium.*

MEANING OF SYMBOLS:

Y: Yes YF: Yes Frequently R: Rarely
N: No, or Never O: Occasionally ?: Uncertain

24. Y O N Do your parents encourage you to bring your friends to your home?
25. Y N ? Do you think you are allowed as many social liberties as other boys of your age?
26. Y O N If not, do you argue for more liberty?
27. Y O N Do your parents set a time for you to be in at night?
28. YF O R Are you in at that time?
29. Y O N ? Do you feel your parents treat you as a young man your age should be treated?
30. Y N ? Do your parents give you opportunities to share responsibilities as much as you would like?
31. Y N ? Do you think your father is old fashioned in some of his ideas?
32. Y N ? Do you think your mother is old fashioned in some of her ideas?
33. Y N ? Do you think your mother is old fashioned in dress?
34. *a*) Y N ? Was your father born in this country?
    b) Y N ? Was your mother born in this country?
35. Y N ? Do you feel so proud of your parents that you like to have your friends see and meet them?
36. .....*a*) What is your religion?
    .....*b*) Your father's religion?
    .....*c*) Your mother's religion?
37. *a*) About how much education did your father have? ....yrs. of grade school; ....yrs. of high school; ....yrs. of college.
    b) About how much education did your mother have? ....yrs. of grade school; ....yrs. of high school; ....yrs. of college.
38. *a*) Y N ? Is your family frequently troubled with illness?
    b) Y N ? Is your father very nervous?
    c) Y N ? Is your mother very nervous?
    d) Y N ? Are you inclined to be nervous?
39. Y N ? Do you worry easily?
40. What are the things you worry about most? .....
    .....
    .....
    .....
41. YF O R Do you ever feel "mad" at your father while at the same time you feel you must be loyal to him?
42. YF O R Do you ever feel "mad" at your mother while at the same time you feel you must be loyal to her?
43. YF O R Do you ever feel "mad" at other members of the family while at the same time you feel you must be loyal to them?
44. Y N ? Do you fear your father (obey him because you have to) rather than love him?
45. Y N ? Do your parents approve of all your friends?
46. Y O N If not, do you stop going with them?
47. YF O N Has a difference in the religious beliefs of your parents ever caused you any difficulties?
48. YF O N Have you ever had "fights" with your parents on matters of religion?
49. YF O N Do your parents try to impose on you their own ideas and customs?
50. Y N ? Are you frequently scolded by either or both of your parents?
51. Y N ? Do you think your father is sometimes unreasonable in his commands?
52. Y N ? Do you think your mother is sometimes unreasonable in her demands?
53. Y N ? Does your family expect more from you than you can ordinarily accomplish?
54. YF O R Do you discuss your difficulties and personal problems with your father?
55. Y N ? Do you feel your father understands your difficulties?
56. YF O R Do you discuss your difficulties and personal problems with your mother?
57. Y N ? Do you feel your mother understands your difficulties?
58. What do you think are the reasons why boys are sometimes misunderstood by parents? .....
    .....
    .....
    .....
    .....
    .....

MEANING OF SYMBOLS:
Y: Yes YF: Yes Frequently R: Rarely
N: No, or Never O: Occasionally ?: Uncertain

59. *a*) Y N ? Have your dealings with your father usually been satisfactory?
b) Y N ? Have your dealings with your mother usually been satisfactory?
60. Y N ? Do you understand the reason why a boy should obey his parents in everything (provided it isn't wrong)?
61. Y N ? Do you approve of the way your parents try to guide you?
62. If not, what don't you like about their method? .....
.....
.....
.....
63. YF O R Do your parents encourage you and "pep you up" in your schoolwork?
64. Y N ? Are you satisfied with your health?
65. Y N ? Do you feel satisfied with your character?
66. Y N ? Do you feel you understand yourself quite well?
67. Y N ? Do you feel pretty well satisfied with the life you have to live?
68. Y N ? Are you perfectly clear as to what is and what is not a sin in regard to purity?
69. Y N ? Do you feel rather sure you know what should be the proper attitude toward sex?
70. Y N ? Are you allowed to go out at night as often as you think a boy your age should be allowed to go out?
71. Y N ? Do you have any doubts as to what is allowed and what is not allowed when out on a date with a girl?
72. Y N ? Do you feel you need clearer rules on what is sinful regarding impure thoughts, words, actions?
73. YF O R Have the movies ever given you wrong ideas about sex, love, and petting?
74. Check from which sources you obtained your first information on sex:
....father ....companions
....the street ....movies
....my brothers ....mother
....books ....priest
....relatives ....older people
....teachers ....magazines
....doctor ....my sisters
....newspapers .....
75. Did this information have a good or bad effect on you? .....
.....
.....
.....
76. Y N ? Did you lose your confidence in your parents because of the way they handled the sex problem in your case?
77. Check from which sources you have since obtained information on sex:
....father ....companions
....the street ....movies
....my brothers ....mother
....books ....priest
....relatives ....older people
....teachers ....magazines
....doctor ....my sisters
....newspapers .....
78. Whenever the thought of sex comes to my mind, I usually find myself regarding it as: (*Check which.*)
...something mysterious ...something fearful ...lots of fun ...a source of thrills ...something dirty and vulgar ...a power of creation we share with God ...something sacred ...an ever present opportunity for pleasure ...something disgusting ...something that puzzles me.
79. Do you think it is part of the routine of going out with a girl to "pet" and "neck"?
Yes, No, Uncertain.
a) Do you think it necessary for popularity? .....
.....
.....
.....
b) Do you think that girls expect it of you? .....
.....
.....
.....
c) Do you think it is sinful? .....
.....
.....
.....
80. YF O R Do you worry much over sex (purity) difficulties?
81. Y O N Do you like to go to Confession?

MEANING OF SYMBOLS:

Y: Yes — YF: Yes Frequently — R: Rarely
N: No, or Never — O: Occasionally — ?: Uncertain

82. Do you refrain from asking about all your difficulties in Confession·
   a) YF O N Because you fear the priest knows you?
   b) YF O N Because you fear the conversation will be overheard?
   c) YF O N Because others may think you peculiar if you stay in too long?
83. Y O N ? Do you feel that Confession **definitely** helps you in dealing with your personal problems?
84. YF O R Do you go to Confession because someone **tells you to go** (rather than because you yourself want to)?
85. Y O N Do you like to go to Holy Communion?
86. What is your biggest personal problem or difficulty in life (what worries or troubles you most)? (If you haven't any, write: *"none."*).....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
87. YF O N Have you ever felt that life is too complicated to understand what it is all about?
88. YF O R Do you become discouraged easily?
89. What are the things you fear most? (If nothing, write: *"nothing."*) ....
.....
.....
.....
90. YF O N Do the things you hear from others ever cause you to question certain things in your religion?
91. Do you worry about conditions in the world? **very much, somewhat, a little, not at all.**
92. Y N ? Do you fear the responsibilities that await you when you are grown up?
93. YF O N ? Do you ever have serious doubts about things that you feel are rather important?
94. If so, what are the things you usually have doubts about? .....
.....
.....
.....
.....
95. YF O N Have you ever been puzzled over the **disagreement** between the teaching of the Church on what is sinful and **certain popular ideas**?
96. Y N ? Did you have a happy childhood?
97. Y O N Is your life at present happy?
98. Y N ? Do you have an ideal or hero?
99. Y N If not, are you much concerned about not having one?
100. Who is your hero or ideal? .....
.....
.....
101. Y N ? Do you feel you have more self-confidence than that of a good many people?
102. YF O N Do you get into moods when you can't seem to cheer up to save yourself?
103. YF O N Do you feel so conscious of your faults that you can't enjoy anything?
104. YF O N Do you feel as though you don't have much backbone of your own?
105. YF O R Do you ever feel sad and depressed or "down in the mouth"?
106. If so, what generally causes this feeling? .....
.....
.....
.....
107. YF O R Do you find difficulty in making friends and "getting along" easily with others?
108. YF O R Since the eighth grade, have you ever had a "crush" on (fell in love with) a teacher or older person?
109. YF O N Have those whom you go around with ever had a bad influence on you?
110. Y N ? Do most of the boys you go with look upon a boy who doesn't use bad language as a "sissy"?
111. Y N ? Do you frequently feel that the things you are interested in are quite different from those others are interested in?
112. YF O R Are you ever bothered by feelings of loneliness?
113. If so, what do you think are the causes? .....
.....
.....
.....
114. Y N ? Do you feel that on the

MEANING OF SYMBOLS:

Y: Yes YF: Yes Frequently R: Rarely
N: No, or Never O: Occasionally ?: Uncertain

whole you are as successful as the average boy?

115. Y N ? If not, does this cause you serious mental struggle?
116. Y N ? Do you know how to overcome these mental struggles?
117. YF O R Do you think high-school boys ever get jealous of other boys who are leaders?
118. Y N ? Have you **frequently** "felt out of place" because of a feeling of awkwardness?
119. YF O R Have you shunned others because of this?
120. YF O R Does being shy cause you serious concern?
121. YF O R Have you ever worried about whether you were normal or not?
122. Y N ? Do you feel everybody seems to understand you?
123. If not, by whom aren't you understood? (*Check which.*)
....father ....mother
....teachers ....relatives
....everybody ....boy friends
....girl friends ....my brothers
....my sisters ....older people
124. What do you think is the main reason why a boy at times is **not understood** by his boy friends, girl friends, older people? .....
.....
.....
.....
125. If you feel you are frequently misunderstood, does this puzzle or pain you? **very much, somewhat, a little, not at all.**
126. Y N ? Do you feel you are attractive to girls?
127. YF O N Do you go out with girls?
128. *a*) Do girls help or hinder you in your spiritual life? .....
.....
b) In your studies? .....
.....
.....
129. Y N ? Do your parents or the parents of your girl friend encourage your visiting her in the home?
130. *a*) Y N Some Are your best boy friends Catholic?
b) Y N Some Are your best girl friends Catholic?
131. Y N ? Do you think the school provides sufficient opportunities for boys and girls to get together socially?
132. YF O N Do you find a "lack of finances" a serious difficulty in your social activities?
133. Y N ? Do you think your parish provides sufficient social "get-togethers" for boys and girls?
134. YF O N Do you drink anything stronger than beer when out with your friends?
135. If so, what is your main reason for so doing? .....
.....
.....
.....
136. Y N Some ? Do the girls you go out with approve of a boy's drinking liquor?
137. Y N Some ? Do the boys you go with encourage you to drink liquor?
138. Y N ? Has drinking liquor ever brought you any difficulties or bad effects?
139. YF O R Do you ever find leisure time wearisome?
140. How much time per day do you generally spend in daydreaming? (*Encircle one.*)
5–10 min. 15–20 min. half hour
one hour 2 hrs. 3 hrs. 4 hrs.
5 hrs. 6 hrs. or more none
141. What do you most frequently catch yourself daydreaming about? .....
.....
.....
.....
142. YF O N Do you enjoy reading during your leisure time?
143. Y N ? Do you think your reading influences you very much?
144. What are the topics most frequently talked about among boys?
a) .....
b) .....
c) .....
145. If you could have 3 wishes granted, what would you ask for?
a) .....
b) .....
c) .....
146. Name the magazines you read regularly (mention in the order of preference): .....
.....
.....

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. . . . . .
. . . . . .

147. How often do you usually go to the movies? (*Encircle one.*)
1 a week 2 a week 3 a week
4 a week 5 a week 1 a month
2 a month 3 a month very
rarely never

148. Why do you go to the movies?
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

149. Check the **kind** or **type** of movie you like best:
. . . Gangster-G Men . . . Historical
. . . Musical Comedy . . . I like several
. . . Educational . . . No preference
. . . "Comedy of Manners" . . . Mystery
. . . Travel . . . Western
. . . News . . . Love Story

150. Have the movies ever influenced your conduct, actions, or way of thinking? **Yes much, somewhat, not at all, uncertain.**

151. If so, in what way? . . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

152. **YF O R** After seeing a movie, do you come away as satisfied with your condition in life as before you went in?

153. **YF O N ?** Have the movies ever lessened your respect for authority?

154. **Y N ?** Do you feel the movies are an important guiding influence in your life?

155. Why? . . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

156. **Y N ?** Have you settled the question of your future lifework?

157. **YF O R** If you haven't, do you worry much about it?

158. **Y N ?** Has the school helped you toward settling this question of your future lifework?

159. **Y N ?** Have you sought guidance from anyone regarding your future lifework?

160. From whom have you sought guidance? (*Encircle which.*)
father mother teachers my
brothers my sister priest boy
friend relatives other friends
. . . . . .

MEANING OF SYMBOLS:

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179. Y N ? Do you think your teachers would betray your confidence if you spoke to them about such personal matters?
180. Y N ? Do you **fear** some of your teachers, rather than **love** and **revere** them?
181. I feel all of my teachers are: (*Check what you agree with.*)
....kind ....fair
....patient ....helpful
....friendly ....understanding
....intelligent ....even tempered
....interested in me
....able to teach
....persons with a sense of humor
....good disciplinarians
....impartial (have no pets)
182. When thoughts of your studies occur to you, do happy or unhappy thoughts **usually** come to mind? *Happy, unhappy, both, neither.*
183. What distracts you most when trying to concentrate? (*Encircle which.*)
girls sports radio noise impure thoughts future plans troubles people talking social activities other:.....
184. YF O R Are you satisfied with the marks you get in school?
185. YF O N Does getting low marks depress you seriously?
186. YF O R Does insistence on "high marks" disgust you (rather than encourage you)?
187. Y O N Do you have regular work to do after school or on week ends?
188. Y O N Does this work interfere with your studies?
189. In my studies I regard myself as: **successful, only fairly successful, failing.**
190. If you are failing in some of your studies, what do you think are the reasons? (*Check which.*)
....am not bright enough
....had poor foundation
....have poor teacher
....am not interested
....have a teacher who doesn't understand me
....have to work after school
....have a teacher who is prejudiced
....have extracurricular activities which interfere
....don't know
....other: .....
191. Mention the difficulties or problem in your school life that puzzles you most: (If you haven't any, write: *"none."*)
.....
.....
.....
192. YF O N Do you worry over your studies?
193. YF O R Does the radio interfere with your studies?
194. Y N ? Do you feel you lack self-confidence?
195. Y N ? Do you feel you have to participate in any school activities outside of studies which hinder you in any way?
196. Name these activities and in what way they hinder you: .....
.....
.....
.....
197. Y N ? If you lack ability to participate in certain activities, does this bother you much?
198. For which activities do you lack ability to participate? .....
.....
199. Y N ? Do you have sufficient opportunities to participate in activities you are interested in?
200. Y N ? Do you feel you are well fitted for all the school subjects you have to take?
201. If not, for which subjects aren't you fitted? (*Encircle which.*)
Mathematics English Latin
Science German French
Religion History Commercial subjects Most of them Others:
202. Y N ? Do you feel there is sufficient explanation of sex and purity in your school?
203. Y N ? Do you find your religion course practical enough, i.e., easy to apply to your everyday life?
204. Y N ? Do you think there is too much religion in your school and as a result feel "fed up" on it?
205. Y N ? Do you feel religion is more of a hindrance than a help in your life?
206. Y N ? Is "how to learn to appreciate the Mass" one of your problems?
207. Y N ? Do you think your parish

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offers you sufficient opportunities for personally engaging in Catholic Action activities?

208. **Y N ?** Do you think your **school** offers you sufficient opportunities for personally engaging in Catholic Action activities?

209. **Y N ?** Honestly, do you feel that religion is a **joyful** thing?

210. **Y N ?** Do you feel you have to take subjects which won't do you any good later on?

211. If so, *encircle* which ones:
Algebra Geometry Latin German French Religion Church History Physics Chemistry General Science English Literature English Grammar Ancient History Modern History American History Shorthand Typing Bookkeeping Other:

212. **Y N ?** Have you always found **agreement** between what you learned in the grades and what you learned later?

213. **Y N ?** If not, did this puzzle you much?

214. **Y N ?** Do you think your school is preparing you to meet life's problems and to earn your living later on?

We would like to have you **mention here** any problem of yours which has been omitted in these questions; we further ask you to **make any comment** you would care to add: .....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

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